

Chapter One

Schooling for Everyone

We have always had education, and it is always with us. Some of it is intentional; most of it is unintentional. In the history of humankind, schools are relatively new. The education they offer is intentional. Like all human creations, schools require our attention or they wither. Because the education that schools are to furnish is usually thought to be both important and not assured as part of the casual education routinely provided by the surrounding culture, presumably everyone in that culture should participate. In other words, the education made intentional through schooling should be universal.

The idea of education through *paideia*—by, in, and for the culture—has a long and noble tradition. It is represented in the initiation rites of cultures around the world. Anthropologist Alicja Iwańska describes a period of three to four weeks among Melanesians in the Bismarck Archipelago when adult males and females tell tales at night around the fire—tales that convey elements of the culture that are worthy of preservation. The narratives address etiquette, taboos, and customs, as well as punishments for those who break them.

In the southwestern United States, a part of the world closer at hand and more familiar to most of our readers than the Bismarck Archipelago, the Zuni Indians take collective responsibility for guiding any and all children's behavior. Around a communal bowl in the *kiva* (a usually round ceremonial structure that is partly underground) of the Hopi Indians, stories are told and retold in a process of spontaneous social education. "In the case of the Zuni

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Indians, the self-appointed casual adults were the transmitters of the cultural heritage to children casually met; in the case of the Hopi, the elders of the community were the spontaneous educators; in the case of the [Melanesian] people of Lesu, the educators were the adult males and females. No one of those transmitters was even to the smallest degree a self-conscious specialist in educational planning.”¹

Drawing presumably from Greek and Roman tradition, *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* injects deliberate intent into the definition of *paideia*: “training of the physical and mental faculties in such a way as to produce a broad enlightened mature outlook harmoniously combined with maximum cultural development.” In modern times, Mortimer Adler’s definition has sharpened educational intent: “the equivalent of the Latin *humanitas* (from which ‘the humanities’), signifying the general learning that should be the possession of all human beings.”²

In *Webster’s* and Adler’s definitions are both the context that provides a necessary educational agenda for enculturating the members of the group, tribe, or community and the probable need for some kinds of mechanisms for ensuring universal attention to that agenda. Implicit in the well-being of the collective—not just of the individual—is an awareness that we, the people, however diverse we are, must live in a considerable degree of harmony with everybody and everybody’s children, or else the group, the tribe, the community dissipates, disperses, or perishes. The evidence is in the history of humankind.

Education, Schooling, and Teaching

The idea that education through *paideia* provides a cultural transition from childhood to adulthood is very old. Embedded in this idea, apparently, is the operational concept of drawing the attention of the young to elements that are important to the culture’s healthy continuation. Acquisition of the dispositions required for the retention of these elements necessitates repetition that in turn

makes the necessary behavior routine. Twentieth-century psychologist B. F. Skinner built the contingencies to be repeatedly encountered by the inhabitants of his envisioned utopia as they walked the paths toward developing “a broad enlightened mature outlook harmoniously combined with maximum cultural development.”³ Ideally there would be much ongoing debate about the validity of the contingencies. Who would determine them? What values and virtues would be embedded in them? How should those contingencies decided upon be transmitted and by whom? What should be preserved?⁴

Herein lies a clutch of the most controversial issues surrounding yesterday’s and today’s conduct of schooling, the mechanism that, at an accelerating pace, came to be charged with taking the chance out of education through *paideia*. Some of the sense of adult responsibility for the enculturation of the young over a transitional period into adulthood has, over time, supported the development of educational institutions. As a consequence, schooling has helped to create and subsequently to expand childhood.⁵

The status of childhood and both parental and cultural expectations for the young have always been enmeshed in ambiguity. For how long and to what degree would the indiscretions of children be treated with educative intent before warranting the punishment befitting adult malfeasance? The schools created several hundred years ago for preparing European children for adulthood were to be instruments of strict discipline. Much of this concept of discipline was carried over into the early schools of the New World, where it is still alive today.

How long were the family and the community to await the aging of children into economic usefulness? Labor laws to protect children have been a long time in coming and are not yet universal. What should be the role of the schools in preparing the young for such usefulness? And should this role be differentiated to align with the hardened caste systems characterizing human existence? These alignments come in many forms, often subtle. The most obvious are differentiated schools, differentiated curricula within

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the same schools, and regularities—cultural norms—that differentiate access to education according to hierarchies of caste.

The most encompassing issue pertaining to an intentional period of education for the young through the institution of schooling is that of *mission*. Is the apparatus of schooling—purpose, conditions, modes of conduct—to be geared to a cultural ethos of child development or is it to be first and foremost an instrument dedicated to preparation for adulthood? Is it a system with children at its center or a system in which children and childhood are nuisances to the enterprise? If it is the latter, then schooling will have no moral compass.

The preceding discussion shows that *education* and *schooling* are not interchangeable words. Education is ubiquitous; it happens, everywhere. Operationally, on the one hand, it is a self-induced activity: nobody can give it to me, nobody can take it away. Schooling, on the other hand, is a planned, deliberate, intentional enterprise, part of the larger educational enterprise. Adults have something in mind for me to learn; they expect me to partake of that learning; they authorize teachers with the intent of seeing to it that I do learn. Of course, I don't have to. But contingencies are arranged on the assumption that they will make it easier for me to learn or, put another way, more difficult for me to escape the learning intended. Indeed, sometimes these contingencies make it dangerous for one not to learn. But they do not necessarily make the learning attractive and easier to acquire.

Contrary to popular belief, the concepts of education, schooling, and teaching are not necessarily inherently good. Further definition is necessary to make such a determination. They are, of course, all moral endeavors, but *moral*, too, is a morally neutral word. We learn to love or to hate, to give or to take, to kill or let live. The moral aspect—whether good or bad—is inseparable from culture, acquired through *paideia*, intentionally and unintentionally.

But a culture in which the good is deeply embedded cannot guarantee that everyone will come to possess the valued attributes. Creating a technology to explore outer space that includes the

necessary human expertise is a piece of cake compared to forging the infrastructure necessary to accomplish a culture's most exalted moral educational mission—sustaining a wise citizenry. A culture that takes this mission lightly by delegating it solely to its schools is not wise. A culture that takes lightly the moral character of the whole of its teaching is doomed.

The reader may conclude that there is a contradiction in a moral mission that, on the one hand, places the nurturing of childhood first and, on the other, sees sustaining a wise citizenry as primary. Our answer is that the best preparation for the latter is the former. The roots of the self-transcendence characteristic of the mature adult are embedded in childhood. Teaching children about adulthood can excite their imaginations but probably will do little to help them with the contingencies of daily life. The best assurance of a broad, enlightened outlook combined with maximum cultural development in adulthood is its genesis in the culture of childhood. Children are engaged in learning every minute they are awake. It is the wise guiding of this learning that ensures a wise citizenry.

Part—a very important part—of this guidance is the teaching provided by schools. As a teacher of teachers said to a class of students preparing for such teaching, “Teaching is a moral endeavor and cannot help but be so.” Shifting uneasily in his chair, a future teacher raised his hand and said, “As a teacher, I don’t want to get involved in this moral stuff. It’s just too controversial.” He was not alone in his discomfort. Although people preparing to teach have little trouble with the concept that teaching has both good and bad consequences, few express the intention of becoming moral guidance counselors. Nonetheless, educational philosopher Gary Fenstermacher views teaching as inescapably having a moral dimension:

What makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just, and virtuous are always present. Whenever a teacher asks a student to share something with another

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student, decides between combatants in a schoolyard dispute, sets procedures for who will go first, second, third, and so on, or discusses the welfare of a student with another teacher, moral considerations are present. The teacher's conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter. For that reason alone, teaching is a profoundly moral activity.⁶

The pages that follow say much more about education writ large and about teaching in schools as a moral endeavor, as well as about the cultural sources that compete in the shaping of schools. The context envisioned as most desirable for this shaping is the work-in-progress called *democracy*. Democracy, wherever it is thought to exist, falls short of its own ideals. The authors agree with many thoughtful analysts, some of whom are cited in what follows, that education guided by these ideals is the driving force to the realization of these ideals and to their continuous renewal in the transforming world that is home to the whole of humankind.

Themes of This Book

There are two major themes in what follows and an array of subsidiary ones. Both major themes have been introduced in what precedes. First, there is in all cultures ongoing education for everyone. It is virtually as ubiquitous as the air we breathe. In modern, industrialized cultures, education provides a cacophony of teaching—some deliberate, some not—that challenges the interpreters, presents buzzing confusion, or creates a dulling impact for many.

Society commonly is reluctant to regard this as education. Only a couple of leaders in the television industry, during interviews conducted by a colleague, included education as one of the functions of this medium. All put forward entertaining and providing information; nearly all rejected educating. When the topic of education comes up, the thoughts of most people turn to schooling. As historian Lawrence Cremin once observed, it is folly to talk about educational improvement and excellence apart from the educational

influence of families, peer groups, television and radio broadcasting (today we would add the Internet), the workplace, and more.⁷

Second, there is today in most countries schooling for some. We say “schooling for some” because schooling is an enterprise of the formal political structure. Those in power can and do determine how much schooling is available for whom and even who will learn what under what rules of inclusion and exclusion. Stratification in the regularities put in place often conforms to stratification in the cultural caste system.

Our argument is that the well-being of a *total* culture requires education for all, without exclusivity on the basis of caste: ethnicity, race, sex, heredity, religion, lifestyles and sexual preferences, wealth, assumed intelligence, physical disability, or whatever else humans are able to think up as bases for discrimination. Whatever the medium intended for educating, the provision of *total inclusion* is a moral imperative in a democracy and, it is essential to point out, a practical necessity for the health of all and for the continued renewal of a democratic culture.

The medium of deliberate, intended learning that we address in this book is schooling. We believe our theses (and the agenda we advance) to be appropriate and, we hope, appealing to other agencies committed to serving the public good. Health, welfare, social work, after-school enterprises, and other human services with educational dimensions come to mind. Hal Lawson, for example, has described the adaptation of our agenda by community collaboratives in the service of vulnerable children, youths, and families.⁸

The mission of society’s intended learning, through whatever medium, is in large measure the product of its prevailing ethos. Authoritarian societies dictate mission; democratic societies ideally seek a working consensus. The latter is demanding and complex. As observant visitor Alexis de Tocqueville wrote more than a century and a half ago, our democracy is a daunting “apprenticeship of liberty.”⁹ Political scientist Benjamin Barber has said, “Public schools must be understood as public not simply because they serve the public, but because they establish us as a public”¹⁰—a democratic

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public. But he has also written, “Society undoes each workday what the school tries to do each school day.”¹¹ To repeat Cremin’s warning, it is folly to talk about educational excellence apart from the educational influence of the cacophony of teaching that is ongoing in the culture—thus our effort in what follows to address the interplay among the nation’s ongoing experience with democracy, this ongoing educating, and the experiment in universal schooling with which the United States of America has long been engaged.

All societies want “educated” citizens, regardless of however any given society may chose to define the word *education*. Most modern societies, for example, want a literate population, able to read about and understand current events, laws, safety issues, and much more. Most want able-bodied, competent, cooperative workers. Most want their young to be enculturated into the social and political norms of the society. And in virtually all of these societies it is the schools that are largely responsible for doing whatever is necessary to try to meet these broad goals.

A democratic society is different from other kinds of societies in that while it looks to its schools to perform all of these essential functions, it also looks to its schools to create a very specific kind of citizen: a democratic citizen. A democracy can be successful only to the extent that its citizens are willing and able to assume the responsibilities of self-governance. Simply being literate is not enough. There is nothing democratic, for example, about being able to read the decrees of a dictator, or a racist, or a homophobe, or a fascist. So, while most modern societies may want their schools to produce “literate” people, a democracy demands a special kind of literacy that goes beyond merely comprehending words on a page or adding up columns of figures. It requires a literacy that includes such skills as critical inquiry; knowing how to ask questions and what kinds of questions need to be asked in a given circumstance; knowing how to evaluate the legitimacy and accuracy of an argument and the data that accompany it, to view issues from a variety of perspectives, and to evaluate the implications of a given text, read between the lines, and recognize and understand the

unstated, the omitted, the subtext. In other words, literacy in a democracy is not only a special kind of literacy; it is also a more complex kind of literacy. And because of its uniqueness and its importance, teaching literacy in a democracy has a different kind of moral dimension than, say, teaching literacy under an authoritarian regime.

In the chapters ahead we explore in much greater detail the unique relationship between education and democracy, and the implications of that relationship for all of us in society. We also tell a story of sorts. It is the story of what has become the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. The Agenda guides a nationwide initiative that has evolved from several decades of inquiry into democracy, education, schooling, and cultural change. The Agenda seeks not only to reassert the centrality of preparation for democratic citizenship as the foremost mission of public schooling, but also to engage others—for example, politicians, journalists, parents, and sociologists—in ongoing collaborative processes of study, evaluation, and discussion aimed at furthering and improving this undertaking.

What follows in this chapter is a short history of the major activities that contributed to the substance of the Agenda, activities that involved many people. Chapter Two presents an abbreviated summary of the Agenda's mission, the conditions necessary to its conduct, and strategies for implementation. The Agenda is not a blueprint, nor is it a static plan for educational improvement. Like democracy itself, it is a work in progress.

The Agenda is designed to invite professional educators and all those community groups participating in or concerned about the vital role of education in our democracy to consider the Agenda's relevance to their interests and work. Our intent in Chapters Three through Seven is to bring the reader along through what was for us the formative work out of which the Agenda evolved, and then, in Chapter Eight, to return to its substance once again, highlighting major components, and to our experiences with its implementation. It would be interesting to know whether you come out where we did.

Beginnings: A Study of Schooling

There are many places we might choose to begin to tell the story of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. We could, for example, go back to Aristotle and cobble together the theoretical foundations on which modern democracy rests. We could look at the struggles and debates of the framers of the U.S. Constitution. We could summon the literature describing early efforts to create a viable system of public education in this country and the many and diverse ideas that still surround and inform that ongoing process. And scattered among these places are many others—all of them compelling and worthy—where we might also begin to tell a story that has, it seems, many, many beginnings.

But just as there is no one beginning to our story, there is no one story either. Rather, the Agenda for Education in a Democracy emerges from many connecting and sometimes conflicting narratives. Like those narratives, the Agenda is an ongoing saga: continually evolving, responding to changes in the world around us, struggling to make itself better, more useful, more effective.

Nevertheless, with no beginning there can be no story. Kenneth Sirotnik wrestled with this problem when he and his colleagues assembled an evaluative report examining the work done by two educational agencies: the Center for Educational Renewal (CER) and the Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI).¹² In this report, Sirotnik recalled a statement made by John Goodlad (one of the founders of both the CER and the IEI) in 1970: “Nothing short of a simultaneous reconstruction of preservice teacher education, in-service teacher education, and schooling itself will suffice if the [educational] change process is to be adequate.”¹³ What Goodlad then termed *reconstruction* would later evolve into the concept of *simultaneous renewal*, which we examine in much greater detail in the pages to come.

The genesis of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy became apparent in the mid-1980s when John Goodlad, Kenneth Sirotnik, and Roger Soder created the CER at the University of Washington. But this could not have occurred had the groundwork

not been laid during the roughly fifteen years that preceded it. One critical component of what in retrospect might be regarded as a preparatory period was the Study of Educational Change and School Improvement (SECSI).

The SECSI was begun in the mid-1960s and centered on a collaborative effort involving eighteen elementary schools in eighteen different school districts working in partnership with the University of California at Los Angeles. This collaboration came to be known as the League of Cooperating Schools. The study itself was conducted by the Research Division of the Institute for Development in Educational Activities (IDEA) under the direction of John Goodlad.

From the SECSI there emerged several important concepts that would later inform much of the work of both the CER and the IEI. Among them were the following:

- Schools as both the center and unit of change
- The principal's crucial leadership role and the importance of developing a culture of individual and collective staff renewal
- An understanding of the dynamics of the change process that would come to be known as DDAE, or dialogue, decision making, action, and evaluation
- A better understanding of the ecology of educational change and the support structures essential to promoting it

Several of the League schools' principals would go on to serve as superintendents in other districts and to implement—with varying degrees of success—much of what they learned as a result of the study.

The impact of the SECSI findings and those of seminal studies conducted by many other researchers, reported in books and articles in the early to mid-1970s, was much less than it might have been had the nation not been engaged with challenging major social and political issues. By the end of the 1960s, education could no longer command the attention it had during the earlier part of

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the decade, when such federally funded reform efforts as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 had received considerable popular support.

Wondering why so much effort had resulted in so little change, Frances Klein, John Goodlad, and several teachers in the laboratory school of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) began a series of inquiries that resulted in a pilot study that in turn launched a comprehensive, nationwide investigation of elementary and secondary schooling in the United States conducted by a team of researchers in the Research Division of IDEA and supported by several philanthropic foundations. The investigation was called *A Study of Schooling*. Its depth and scope have never been replicated. The researchers' findings were reported in numerous books and articles, among them *A Place Called School*.¹⁴

A Study of Schooling looked at the subjects being taught in our nation's classrooms; the methods used to teach them; the use of time by teachers and administrators; parental concerns and expectations; sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among teachers, students, and parents; the ongoing education of teachers; daily classroom rituals and routines; and so on. The resulting data indicated that the changes envisioned by political and educational leaders in the 1960s exceeded the systemic capabilities of elementary and secondary schooling at the time. The demands of teaching a variety of subjects with limited time and resources to classrooms of diverse students (in the case of secondary schools, to as many as 150 or more students per day) left little in the way of time, energy, or resources for teachers and administrators to deal with the vast complexities of systemic change. "It was and is bizarre to think," Sirotnik has said, "that periodic faculty meetings in the late afternoon can accomplish anything other than changes (mostly cosmetic) in daily routines."¹⁵

The findings of *A Study of Schooling* offered an interesting counterpoint to the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which emphasized our nation's economic

interests and sought to change many of the practices of schooling. The report stated the following:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. . . . What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.¹⁶

The report went on to propose that schools be restructured to meet the demands of a newly emerging global economy. The central mission and basic tenets in *A Nation at Risk* were to remain a focal point for many educators for years to come. The report itself, and many that would follow, largely ignored the findings of *A Study of Schooling*, as well as of two other major studies of secondary education, one by Ernest Boyer in 1983 and another by TheodoreSizer in 1984.

The Education of Educators

In 1979, John Goodlad, Kenneth Sirotnik, and Paul Heckman created the Laboratory in School and Community Education (LSCE) at UCLA. A major initiative of the LSCE was the development of a closely knit school-university partnership that served as a generating model for more ambitious programs in subsequent years. Throughout the 1980s, the LSCE launched a number of other initiatives.

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One was the Southern California School-University Partnership, which consisted of more than a dozen school districts, five county school offices, two community colleges, and UCLA. The collaboration was based primarily on the idea that there existed “a critical mass of individuals interested in collaborating with persons of like concern and willing to tackle together the educational problems of their time—and even to assume some personal and professional risk in the process.”¹⁷

The Southern California School-University Partnership improved on the stratagem of the League of Cooperating Schools by bringing in school superintendents as major players (they had largely been relegated to the role of approving observers in previous undertakings) as well as by vastly expanding the role of the university in helping to bring about change. This work caught the attention of the college of education at Brigham Young University (BYU). In the autumn of 1983, John Goodlad was invited to work with that institution and its five surrounding school districts in an effort to simultaneously rethink the mission of the college of education at BYU while forging strategic partnerships with these districts. This work marks the beginning of what would later become a major initiative to encourage and support the development of school-university partnerships nationwide.

Goodlad relocated to the University of Washington in 1984. His longtime friend and colleague Kenneth Sirotnik moved to the University of Washington in 1985. Together they teamed up with a new colleague, Roger Soder, and the three of them created the CER there in 1985.

Initially, the CER had two primary purposes. First, building on earlier research, it was to conduct a new study to examine how educators were being prepared for their professions. Second, it was to help build, support, and sustain a nationwide network of school-university partnerships engaged in the work of improving the conditions of schooling based on all that had been learned in the research prior to and concurrent with its founding.

This initiative was somewhat unique in that it would make a determined effort to combine both inquiry and practice. A primary target for research would be teacher education. Whereas *A Study of Schooling* had focused on the conditions and practices of K–12 schooling, the institutions—colleges and universities—that actually prepare educators for our nation’s schools had received relatively little scrutiny.

Over the course of the latter half of the 1980s, Goodlad, Sirotnik, and Soder went to work on what would come to be called the Study of the Education of Educators (SEE). This study inquired into programs around the country that prepared teachers, administrators, and special educators. It looked at the interrelationships among the K–12 schools themselves and the university schools of education and departments of arts and sciences that served to help prepare our nation’s teachers. Like those of its predecessors, the findings of the SEE research were reported in numerous books, articles, and technical reports. Of particular note, the research confirmed that Goodlad and his colleagues had been correct in their earlier assessments that the idea of simultaneous renewal was not only valid as an approach to educational change but perhaps also essential if such change was to be significant and lasting.

Along with the idea of simultaneous renewal was born the idea of the *center of pedagogy*. As envisioned, a center of pedagogy is both a physical entity and a conceptual ideal. Conceptually, a center of pedagogy combines the various—and usually scattered—elements of teacher education “and embeds them in reflective attention to the art and science of teaching.” A center of pedagogy is different from what one might call a center of teacher education in that the latter would probably “embrace only what the name implies—the conduct of teacher education programs devoid of or apart from inquiry into pedagogy. The common neglect of such inquiry has contributed to the low status of teacher education and, to a considerable degree, of teaching itself.”¹⁸

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In *Educational Renewal*, Goodlad elaborates further on the idea of a center of pedagogy:

The term *center of pedagogy* connotes for me an inquiring setting for the education of educators that embraces schools and universities.

Unfortunately, teacher education has come to be associated only with training and the mechanistic ways we teach dogs, horses, and humans to perform certain routinized tasks. This is largely because we have reduced our view of education to such. But teaching in the schools *must not* be perceived this way. . . .

How humans learn and how they can best be taught are subjects of great importance and profound complexity. For teacher education programs not to be connected with ongoing inquiry into these domains is to guarantee their mediocrity and inadequacy. The best assurance for this connection is for teacher education to be conducted in centers of inquiry focused on this learning and teaching—that is, in centers of pedagogy where the art and science of teaching are brought to bear on the education of educators and where the *whole* is the subject of continuous inquiry.¹⁹

While the staff of the CER was conducting its inquiry into the education of educators, a more ambitious effort was beginning to take shape: an effort that would attempt to translate theory into practice. That effort ultimately centered on the founding of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), a nationwide coalition of school-university partnerships working to improve what goes on in schools and classrooms. The collaborating school districts and universities in each NNER partnership agreed to work together to address three primary goals:

1. To promote exemplary performance by universities in their role of educating educators
2. To promote exemplary performance by schools in their role of educating the nation's young people

3. To promote constructive collaboration between schools (and their districts) and universities in ensuring exemplary performance of overlapping mutual self-interests, especially the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of workers for them.²⁰

As work on the development of the NNER and the CER continued, the need to address the “political” and “content” issues of schooling became increasingly apparent. It was recognized that schooling must have a shared, agreed-upon purpose to be relevant and effective. That purpose found its voice in what would become known as the Agenda for Education in a Democracy.

