Create Grassroots Advocacy for Your District and Community Initiatives

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The often used phrase, “It takes a Village to Raise a Child,” is sample lexicon for the concept that Schools Can’t and Should Not Do It Alone Anymore. Likewise, I submit that Building Bridges between the Two Worlds of Education and Community Building is central to quality of life issues in a school community. As such, I believe that a school leader’s primary role must be to Create the Conversation and to Connect the Dots.
Quality of life in 21st Century America isn’t easy or simple. Families know that their children need effective schools and safe, family-friendly community resources—no matter where they live or what their income. Generally, school reform and community building work energetically to strengthen these essential sources of support, often in parallel efforts. Specifically, school reform seeks to strengthen schools so that every child succeeds academically while community building encompasses a variety of approaches that mobilize residents and organize coalitions among local groups to build the community’s social, physical, economic, and political infrastructure. Ideally, these ideas and improvements build upon and maximize each other so that schools and community work in unison to benefit children and families. When they do, they can make all the difference. Usually, however, educators and community builders are isolated from one another. Disconnection, rather than communication, is the norm.
School leaders can exercise leadership in both the internal and external community by leveraging existing resources and connecting traditional silos of expertise to improve district and school performance as well as to achieve community progress. A cultural framework of abundant leadership that builds capacity and challenges everyone to be leaders when the opportunity presents itself is the foundation for taking people with you as the only way to make big things happen.
I proffer the following NINE uncommon leadership initiatives and school community engagement ideas to address this dynamic.
The Table Marketplace

This initiative offers everyone in the school community a “place at the table” and is an online 24/7 space that serves as a hub for connecting with others, serving, and sharing.
Team Gobles

This is an initiative that reinforces the concept that our students will succeed only if everyone in the school community all join together to support them.
The Ambassador Program

This initiative involves parents and community members in a year-long dialogue with the school district that allows participants to go behind the scenes for an in-depth look at the district.
Key Communicators

This initiative consists of a network of people who are well-connected to both the schools and the community.
Partnerships in Education

This initiative brings district schools, individuals, businesses, and community organizations together to build partnerships that enhance student success.
Parent University

This is an initiative that will offer in-person workshops and online resources to support parents in helping their children and families succeed.
Foundation Summer Salute/Winter Solstice

These initiatives are signature fundraising events for the school community with net proceeds benefitting students.
Festival of Families

This is an initiative where families can meet in one setting to learn about and register for all community resources in the geographical area.
Semester Issue Campaigns

These initiatives are a proactive approach to reach and involve the external school community in The Great Conversation and to secure the Prerequisites of Progress.