Dimensions of Leadership and Institutional Success: Exploring Connections and Partnerships

Leading Change through Transformational School Leadership

Edited by

Jeffrey Glanz

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Series Editor: Ellen H. Reames

The *Dimensions of Leadership and Institutional Success* series focuses on issues related to leadership preparation and development and how leadership fosters success in a wide variety of contexts such as K-12 schools, universities, business, health professions and professional schools. Sub-themes include scholarly treatment and practical implications of the role of collaborations, partnerships and ways of connecting to build relationships and leadership capacity.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

As Editor, I am excited to introduce a book in which I am serving as the editor: *Leading Change through Transformational School Leadership*. We are living through tumultuous times, given the unpredictable technological advances, the instability of world politics, the ever-increasing economic disparities worldwide, and the ubiquitous social and cultural upheavals dominating the news through social media. Amid these global social, political, economic, and cultural transformations, education and schooling remain constants for hope, prosperity, and resilience. Schooling, in particular, and education, in general, have been stable institutional and organizational structures serving students of all ages globally. Schools aren't merely reactive to outside pressures but are, ideally, proactive institutions aiming to forge a better society that provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and ethical dispositions necessary to function in an ever-changing 21st-century milieu. Schools serve to provide high-quality instruction as well as to reinforce common values of goodness, equity, and justice for all.

Consequently, schools, although stable forces, must change to meet the challenging needs of 21st-century living. School leaders, in particular, are responsible for creating ways to improve the educational experience. Whether it's adapting the curriculum to meet societal exigencies, creating new programs to support student learning, advancing the education of teachers, providing greater access to parental involvement, forging connections with the surrounding communities, and much more, schools must remain at the forefront of educational change.

This edited volume provides insights into the change process as school leaders grapple with many demanding challenges. Chapters in this volume draw from the real world of practice, highlighting attempts to navigate an ever-increasing complex, diverse environment and grappling with internal and external vicissitudes that inevitably challenge a school leader's convictions and intestinal fortitude. Because problems are more intractable today, school leaders have relied on several theories of leadership to guide their

work in schools. Transformational school leadership theory provides foundational guidance but also draws from other literature bases concerning teaching, learning, teacher leadership, and systems thinking (e.g., improvement science), which are formative.

Each chapter in *Leading Change Through Transformational School Leadership* draws on an expansive leadership literature base to address different yet important change initiatives. The chapters address the challenges and opportunities to affect positive school changes that benefit student learning academically, emotionally, and socially.

Much of the published literature on school change is dated and, or lacks a theoretical grounding in the change literature. Many works offer suggestions without concretizing the change initiatives within the confines of real-world practices. *Leading Change Through Transformational School Leadership* is unique for several reasons: (1) It avoids the aforementioned deficiencies; (2) It provides insights into the change process that are grounded in extant theories about change while, at the same time, highlighting real-life efforts to implement important reform initiatives in school settings; and (3) provides, at the end of each chapter, brief case studies with thoughtful follow-up questions for readers to reflect on the process of school change.

This work is intended for all kinds of school leaders (superintendents and related supporting staff, principals, APs, deans, chairs, etc.) at all school-based levels, i.e., elementary, middle, high school, college, and university. The book can be used in principal preparation programs at the college and university levels at the master's and doctoral levels. It will also appeal to policymakers. The cases in this book are particularly useful in PD opportunities to discuss and learn about implementing change realistically.

Each chapter follows a basic template format, beginning with Pre-focus Guiding Questions to stimulate thought about the major ideas discussed. An Introduction sets the tone for the chapter, providing theoretical background or extant research to support the ideas presented in the chapter. Coming right before a Summary, practical implications of the ideas presented in each chapter provide ideas and tools to actualize school change. A realistic case study with follow-up reflective questions engages the reader to think about the ideas or concepts of each chapter.

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Allow me to say a few words about each of the contributions.

In Chapter 1, Stephen P. Gordon introduces the concept of deep democracy, which considers all community members to be equal, worthy of respect, and entitled to participate in decisions that will affect them. Deep democracy also recognizes that community members are interdependent and thus have a responsibility to work together for the common good. A focus on deep democracy, it is argued, promotes continuous school improvement,

improves student achievement, and prepares students for citizenship in a democratic society. However, due to the traditional organizational structure of schools and other political and social factors, the movement toward deep democracy is challenging. Transformational leadership is needed to facilitate the transition from conventional to democratic schools. The transformational school leader assists members of the school community in developing a democratic vision, challenges and supports members as they move toward that vision, facilitates changes in the school organization and culture, and helps the school community to apply democracy to the core functions of the school: teaching and learning. Prof. Gordon goes beyond a call for advocacy by providing educational leaders with practical guidelines to democratize schooling.

In Chapter 2, Professor Westberry focuses on creating a singular school culture of continuous growth at the high school level. She posits that change is never easy, and cultural change can be the hardest to create. High school content area teachers often cluster together and isolate themselves from others in the building. Thus, the challenge of creating cohesion and a growth mindset among all faculty requires a transformational leader. The chapter presents an actual attempt to alter the culture of a large high school, from maintaining the status quo to developing a growth mindset among all faculty. This change was aimed to increase improvements in student achievement and increase collective self-efficacy among staff members. Challenges faced, mistakes, and lessons learned are shared in this chapter. Specific examples are given in the areas of creating a shared vision, building a culture of collaboration, and empowering teachers to lead – all tenets of transformational leadership.

Chapter 3 contributors, Drs. Reichel and Shenhav, along with Research Lecturer Daniel Chester and a recent master's graduate student Shoshana Karlinsky, report on a mixed-methods study analyzing the results of a questionnaire distributed to 217 school leaders (teachers and principals) to assess the state of teacher professional development [PD]. Interviews were also conducted with 20 school principals. PD, in many schools, is episodic, often administered in a top-down fashion initiated without meaningful input by teachers, among other problems. The study conducted by the chapter authors reflects several intractable issues in offering effective PD. The discussion focuses on the importance of transformational and instructional leadership to make PD more effective on several levels. Concrete suggestions for doing so are proffered.

In Chapter 4, Professor Zepeda and colleagues examine the lessons learned as a school district in the United States pressed forward to reform literacy instruction in grades 1–3 by moving to the Science of Reading. The complexities of transformational change on a district level are meticulously addressed. Coherence between the district and school levels underlying this system-wide change across eight schools is emphasized as critical to the

change process. In addition, the attention to coherence in policies, practices, and processes illustrates that when school districts innovate, they can build capacity and leverage learning for adults. This chapter offers a unique contribution with insights into large-scale system transformation.

In Chapter 5, Professor Shaked explores the conceptual framework of instructional leadership within the broader context of transformational school leadership, highlighting its critical role in facilitating change in schools. Not too long ago, instructional leadership was not viewed as a principal's primary or at least a very important responsibility. More and more school systems now, though not enough, have paid closer attention to the importance of instructional leadership. Instructional leaders primarily aim to transform teaching and learning in alignment with the school's mission, evaluate instruction and programs, and facilitate curriculum and professional development by creating professional learning communities to promote student learning and achievement. The chapter focuses on the four main elements of instructional leadership: instructional vision, instructional program, instructional climate, and teacher development. Each element is addressed in detail, drawing from extant literature and research and drawing practical implications.

In Chapter 6, Professor Hazi tackles several taken-for-granted notions about teacher evaluation, which she decries as a failure. Instead, she introduces the concept of "intelligent accountability," which represents a system that can transform teaching and learning, encourage participatory leadership, and promote a professional learning community, all aspects of transformational leadership. She presents this concept as a way to think about helping teachers transform and account for their practice through self-reflection and evaluation. The role of team teaching, peer observation, self-evaluation, and evidence literacy are explored within a system of intelligent accountability and as a way for principals to transform and improve individuals and groups of teachers. She highlights a school known as Corbett Prep, an independent day school where teachers team to plan, teach, and assess instruction. Her work provides guidance to educational leaders who are dissatisfied with traditional practices of teacher evaluation with promising practices for change.

Chun Sing Maxwell Ho, in Chapter 7, discusses middle school leaders as instrumental in actualizing transformational leadership through entrepreneurial action. These leaders create a vision, but the vision is actually challenging, given various organizational constraints and challenges. The paper focuses on the efforts of a middle school principal to convert visionary principles into concrete, actionable outcomes that nurture environments ripe for middle leaders and school improvement. The study offers a wealth of insights for transformational leadership at the middle school level in transforming otherwise traditional organizational policies and practices into actionable strategies and thoughtful reflections on nurturing a culture

of innovation and adaptability. By dissecting the experiences of middle leaders who have successfully navigated the transition from conceptual frameworks to tangible educational outcomes, the chapter provides strategies to equip school leaders with the knowledge to empower their teams, advocate for resourceful problem-solving, and champion a collaborative approach to leadership.

In Chapter 8, Rachel Solis asserts that reflective dialogue facilitated effectively by educational leaders can transform perspectives and practices to improve schools. While reflection supports us to understand where we are and where we want to be, dialogue allows us to deprivatize beliefs and collectively work to actualize change. Leadership for school change through reflective dialogue entails fostering "deep conversations" centered around educational beliefs and the relationship between those beliefs and the school's day-to-day practices. Reflective dialogue, above all, challenges individual and institutional assumptions, explores diverse perspectives, fosters critical thinking, and leads to informed and intentional decision-making that enhances teaching and outcomes for students. Dr. Solis, an educational coach and consultant working with classroom teachers, departmental teams, and school leaders to foster reflective dialogue, shares examples and insights from the literature and practice to demonstrate the power of reflective dialogue to empower and encourage shared leadership and align the connection between the specifics of school practices and student learning.

The book ends with a most critical review of the change process offered by Professors Bogotch and Su-Keene. We end the book with this chapter because it challenges us to think deeply and critically about school-district change. Change, they argue, is ever-present and inevitable. Yet the tools and strategies we have utilized to affect meaningful change are neither sustained nor institutionalized as described in traditional change theories. Drawing upon the consequences of the COVID pandemic that led to "learning loss," they posit that an opportunity for real change was possible to thwart educational state and national imposed mandates for standardized testing and compliance to other innate measures. They draw upon transformational leadership literature to promote true emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice. The chapter contributors challenge readers to break through taken-for-granted notions of change by introducing the notions of narrative and disruptive leadership that, in the words of Maxine Greene, urges educators to "find an aperture in the wall of what is taken for granted; to pierce the webs of obscurity; to see and then to choose." Drs. Bogotch and Su-Keene end the chapter with a realistic case focusing on educational change beyond traditional conceptualizations of educational leadership. *Leading Change Through Transformational School Leadership* thus ends with no easy solutions but much to consider.

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Change is both difficult and necessary. It's difficult because people and organizations prefer stability and tradition. It's necessary because technological, social, and cultural forces demand new ways of looking at and doing things. The change process is complex. I would be remiss if I didn't cite the work of the person who has probably given us the most significant insight into the change process: Michael Fullan. His work is formative, inspirational, and practical.

The contributors to this volume have given us diverse insights into the change process from a transformational leadership perspective. Transformational leadership focuses on organizational change through visionary and charismatic leadership aimed at improving schools. Transformational leaders articulate an ethical and moral vision for their work and seek to engage educational stakeholders in efforts to redesign the organization. The contributors to *Leading Change Through Transformational School Leadership* echo such a vision. Theories have been addressed, and practical strategies have been presented. It's up to our readers to think, reflect, and act upon the information we present.

Finally, to encourage readers to reflect on the issues presented, I have created a WhatsApp Leadership group to continue the conversation. I welcome you to join and participate by posing questions, offering suggestions, and reacting to others in an effort to share and grow together as a community of learners and concerned educational leaders.

Follow this link to join my WhatsApp group: https://chat.whatsapp.com/CLW9fX2nPsxAw1Q5mACzmf.

We also urge you to contact the contributors of this volume to further the conversation. Emails are provided for each contributor.

Thank you for your continued success, professionally and personally.

Jeffrey Glanz
June 2025

CHAPTER 1

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

Stephen P. Gordon
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ABSTRACT

In Chapter 1, Professor Stephen P. Gordon introduces the concept of deep democracy, which considers all community members to be equal, worthy of respect, and entitled to participate in decisions that will affect them. Deep democracy also recognizes that community members are interdependent and thus have a responsibility to work together for the common good. A focus on deep democracy, it is argued, promotes continuous school improvement, improves student achievement, and prepares students for citizenship in a democratic society. However, due to the traditional organizational structure of schools and other political and social factors, the movement toward deep democracy is challenging. Transformational leadership is needed to facilitate the transition from conventional to democratic schools. The transformational school leader assists members of the school community in developing a democratic vision, challenges and supports members as they move toward that vision, facilitates changes in the school organization and culture, and helps the school community to apply democracy to the core functions of the school: teaching and learning. Prof. Gordon goes beyond a call for advocacy by providing educational leaders with practical guidelines to democratize schooling.

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Keywords: Democratic leadership; transforming schools; democratic school communities; non-traditional school organizations; democratizing schooling

Prefocus Guiding Questions

- *What are the primary characteristics of a deep democracy?*
- *What are the primary attributes of a democratic school principal?*
- *What are some ways each of the following can provide democratic school leadership: (a) teachers, (b) students, (c) students' families, (d) other community members?*

INTRODUCTION

A critical purpose of public schools in a democratic society is to prepare students for democratic participation in that society. Students learn democracy best in democratic schools, which require democratic leadership. This chapter describes deep democracy, what it looks like in schools, and the challenges of introducing it to a school.

The school principal is key to the facilitation of democracy in a school, and the dispositions, skills, and activities of the democratic school leader are described in this chapter. The relationship between democratic and transformational leadership is discussed. A variety of structures and processes for implementing democratic school leadership are reviewed. Although the principal's leadership is critical, in a democratic school community all stakeholders—teachers, students, students' families, and other members of the community who are committed to the school—become democratic leaders, and this chapter examines how each of these stakeholder groups can practice democratic leadership. There are many benefits of democratic leadership and democratic schools, which are summarized in the latter part of the chapter.

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS

Deep Democracy

One way to understand "deep democracy" is to compare it to "thin democracy." Thin democracy includes such elements as personal freedom, individual privacy, the right to vote, and majority rule. Thin democracy clearly is not a bad thing, but it is insufficient. A fully democratic society embraces deep democracy, as described by Dewey (1916):

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of joint communicated experience. The extension in space

> of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer [their] own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to [their] own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept [individuals] from perceiving the full import of their activity. (p. 87)

Literature on deep democracy (Dewey, 1916; Furman & Starratt, 2005; Green, 1999; James, 2010; Kadiver et al., 2020; Ralls, 2019; Woods, 2021; Young, 2000) describes its beliefs, goals, and decision-making process. Those committed to deep democracy believe in the worth and dignity of all people and the interdependence of community members. They also embrace freedom as "a mental attitude rather than external unconstraint of movements" (Dewey, 1916, p. 305). The goals of deep democracy are the growth and development of all individuals, mutually supportive relationships, and the common good.

Decision-making in a deep democracy is inclusive. Members treat each other as equals and share power. At the same time, each member is expected to participate in the decision-making process and accept their share of responsibility for decisions that promote the common good. Decision-making in a deep democracy involves free inquiry and open communication, with diverse opinions welcome. Participants respect one another throughout the decision-making process; they listen to and consider each other's ideas, critique those ideas when appropriate, negotiate differences, and work toward consensus.

Deep Democracy in Schools

Deep democracy in schools means that everyone, including each adult and each student, is valued and respected. A common purpose unites all members of the school community. The common purpose differs from school to school but always reflects a commitment to democratic leadership, democratic teaching, and democratic learning, preparing students to contribute to a democratic society. Jenlink and Jenlink (2008) remind us that "learning communities defined by democratic practices are communities that include rather than exclude, that create knowledge rather than assume that others produce all knowledge, and that expect controversy and conflict to be part of the educative process" (p. 314).

Stakeholder activities in a deeply democratic school tend to merge: the principal, teachers, students, and students' families all engage in leadership, teaching, and learning. All participate in open inquiry, critical reflection, and dialogue within and across the different groups that make up the school community. Examples of democratic activities all stakeholders (including students) can engage in include school governance, inquiry on

how to improve curriculum, teaching, learning, and student assessment, increasing equity at the classroom, school, and community level, and service to others in the school and outside community.

How do stakeholders know they have achieved deep democracy? Gordon and Boone (2014) propose three criteria: inclusion, integration, and internalization. A school meets the *inclusion* criterion when all stakeholders in the school community are involved in the democratic process. *Integration* means that democracy is embedded in all critical aspects of classroom and school life. *Internalization* means that democracy becomes synonymous with the school's culture: "democracy becomes an assumption, a habitual way of dealing with people and situations, a way of life" (p. 52). For schools that have not yet met these criteria, the important thing is continuous growth toward deep democracy.

The Promise and Challenges of Introducing Deep Democracy in Schools

In a school practicing deep democracy, "school members share power, authority, and critical decisions; examine and act upon issues of equity; and consider serving others both within and outside the school" (Williams et al., 2009, p. 468). Deep democracy in schools leads to school improvement, teacher growth, and improved student learning. Democratic schools prepare students to be better citizens and to help sustain a democratic society (Glickman et al., 2024). Later in this chapter, a full review of the positive effects of democratic school leadership is provided, but, for now, a less positive reality needs to be discussed. Despite the promise of deep democracy, most schools are not authentic democracies. This reality calls for an analysis of the challenges to introducing deep democracy in schools and how democratic school leadership can navigate those challenges.

One challenge is what Alderson (2004) refers to as myths about democracy in schools. Some of these myths include beliefs that deep democracy is a wonderful idea but not realistic, that only adults can participate in democracy, that the primary purpose of schools is to socialize students, and that adults must control schools. Another myth discussed by Alderson is that students are best prepared for citizenship by learning ideas and facts *about* democracy rather than learning *in* and *through* democracy.

External pressure on schools is another challenge to democratic schools. For example, Klinker (2006) argues that in the US, "the business community plus state and federal governments are now major players in education. This involvement often chips away at the foundation of democracy, its grass roots" (p. 52). External challenges may also come from district administrators or groups from the local community opposed to democratic schools.

The previous history of the school may be a challenge to deep democracy if that history is one of top-down leadership. If teachers are used to taking directives from the principal and giving directives to students, and families are used to receiving directives from the school, it will be difficult (but not impossible) to transition to a democratic school. Also, if different groups focus on their rights and needs at the expense of other groups, it will be difficult for the school community to embrace collective action for the common good. A related problem is the lack of equity for historically marginalized groups, as deep democracy cannot flourish without equitable treatment of all groups.

How do school leaders committed to democracy navigate the challenges described above? A beginning point is to engage all stakeholders—educators, students, families, and other community members involved with the school—in dialogue about what deep democracy looks like and the positive effects of such democracy. Various groups that make up the school community need to develop skills to engage in democracy, and such skills can be taught through professional development, family education programs, and the school curriculum. Regarding the barrier of inequity, Uy et al. (2024) suggest the following:

> Inclusive decision-making processes must actively address issues of privilege, voice and representation to ensure that the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders are adequately considered (Sykes et al., 2012). This necessitates creating structures and mechanisms that promote equitable access to decision-making opportunities and facilitate the inclusion of marginalized voices. (p. 182)

For stakeholders not used to or comfortable with democratic decision-making, Glickman and Mette (2020) recommend an incremental approach. Formal leaders initially ask stakeholders to choose from options presented to them but, over time, ask those stakeholders to accept full participation in the decision-making process.

Dispositions, Skills, and Activities of the Democratic School Principal

Democracy does not naturally emerge in the conventional school; it needs to be facilitated, and the school principal is the most likely party to provide that facilitation. Several dispositions distinguish the democratic school principal. The principal cares for all members of the school community and thus is committed to listening to those members, meeting their needs, and empowering them (Larsen, 2024). The leader respects and trusts others and expects others to trust them (Harris & Chapman, 2002).

The principal is guided by a set of ethical values, including a commitment to equity, the desire to serve others, and political courage, and communicates those values to others (Gerstl-Pepin & Aiken, 2009).

The democratic school principal also displays various skills necessary to facilitate democracy. Skills for engaging in open dialogue and building trust with stakeholders are essential (Harris & Chapman, 2002). Facilitating democratic collaboration within and across groups requires the principal to possess collaborative skills, including active listening, conflict resolution, creative problem-solving, and consensus-building (Uy et al., 2024). Moreover, Woods (2021) describes "politically adaptive" skills needed when there is resistance to democracy. These skills include those needed to protect members of the school community from external powers opposed to democracy, negotiate differences between the principal's values and the values of other stakeholders, respond to power issues between stakeholder groups, and mediate between instrumental (e.g., student test performance) and substantive (e.g., meaningful learning) goals.

The democratic school principal is both a facilitator and active participant in democratic decision-making. As Glickman and Mette (2020) explain, "in the democratic approach, a leader with formal authority is allowed (and expected) to participate in the group decision-making process, but hierarchy is flattened and formal authority does not determine decisions" (p. 68). Early in developing a democratic school, a critical activity of the principal is working with stakeholders to develop a school vision. The vision should both be created through the democratic process and guide future efforts to develop the school as a deep democracy. Once the school vision has been adopted, the principal has the responsibility of leadership consistent with that vision (Larsen, 2024).

Another essential activity of the democratic principal is to foster a school culture that encourages and rewards democracy. Starratt (2003) states that "democratic leadership is primarily concerned to cultivate an environment that supports participation, sharing of ideas, and the virtues of honesty, openness, flexibility, and compassion" (p. 18). He argues that democratic school leadership should assist stakeholders in focusing their decision-making on the common good, developing the school as a testing ground for democratic life and leadership, and engaging in learning that contributes to building a democratic community.

Relationship of Democratic and Transformational Leadership

Whether democratic and transformational leadership are compatible with each other depends on the transformational model one chooses.

James MagGregor Burns' (1978) classic concept of transformational leadership certainly is democratic in nature:

> The premise of this leadership is that, whatever separate interests persons might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of "higher" goals, the realization of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the collective or pooled interests of leaders and followers…. Transformational leadership is more concerned with end-values, such as liberty, justice, equality. (pp. 425–426)

Denhardt and Campbell (2006), while agreeing that MacGregor Burns' view of transformational leadership is consistent with democratic leadership, discuss how conceptions of transformational leadership have become "bifurcated," with one camp continuing to support MacGregor Burns' perspective and another camp adopting a results-only perspective focused on the charismatic leader using the most efficient and effective means to convince others to accept change the leader believes is needed. Denhardt and Campbell argue in favor of MacGregor Burns model of transformational leadership:

> If we are committed to democratic governance, then it is no longer enough for leaders to come up with an idea and then work to convince others it is right. Instead, we need leaders who work with others to come up with the right ideas. (p. 569)

Green (1999) reminds us that transformational leadership can be negative or positive, citing Hitler and Stalin as negative examples. Green further argues that to be positive, transformation must be "deeply democratic, including all stakeholders in devising mutually satisfactory solutions to shared problems" (p. 216).

In their discussions of applying transformational leadership to schools, scholars like Shields (2018) and Hermanns and Berliner (2021) argue for the democratic version of transformational leadership, aiming to prepare students to be engaged citizens in a democratic society. In other words, the idea is to integrate transformational leadership with democratic leadership. Given the challenges associated with introducing democratic leadership discussed above, a combination of transformational and democratic leadership may be the best approach. For example, Makgato and Mudzanani (2019) found that leaders in schools with high student achievement demonstrated transformational *and* democratic leadership.

Structures and Processes for Democratic School Leadership

Before discussing structures and processes for democratic school leadership, some qualifications are in order. First, for these structures and

processes to be effective, they must exist in a school culture where individuals value and respect each other and are willing to collaborate for the common good. Second, these structures and processes must be consistent with a school vision centered on democratic leadership, teaching, and learning to prepare citizens as full participants in a democratic society.

The ***school council*** is a popular structure for democratic leadership. In one version of democratic governance, each *stakeholder group* (teachers, students, students' families, the outside community served by the school) has its own governance body, each with democratically elected leaders, with members of each stakeholder group serving as representatives to the school council. Issues and recommendations from one or more stakeholder groups are brought before the school council for consideration. The school council can appoint committees, including members of different stakeholder groups, to study issues and develop proposals for council consideration.

Members of the school community can be invited to ***open forums***, some regularly scheduled, some for the purpose of dealing with important concerns that have arisen (Furman & Starratt, 2005). Such forums may result in school improvement teams aimed at designing and implementing action plans, with those teams reporting to the school council and sharing progress at future forums. Regular ***school assemblies*** attended by educators and students can be used to share information, discuss issues, or make decisions. Teachers and students should be involved in planning and presenting at school assemblies. Regular small-scale student, teacher, family, or community ***discussion groups*** can be held at times convenient for the group involved. Breakfast, lunch, after-school, or evening discussion groups may best fit participants' schedules.

Some processes that can involve all stakeholders in democratic decision-making include vision building, curriculum development, instructional improvement, student learning, service to others, student assessment, action research, and program evaluation. Different stakeholders will have different roles in these various activities, but the democratic process should always apply.

Dialogue is an essential part of democratic decision-making. As Furman and Starratt (2005) note, democratic dialogue requires "the ability to listen, understand, empathize, negotiate, speak, debate, and resolve conflicts in a spirit of interdependence and working for the common good" (p. 118).

Teachers and Democratic Leadership

There are two prerequisites for teachers to become fully involved in democratic leadership. First, democratic leadership should relate to teachers' primary interests: teaching and student learning. Second, teachers must have material resources, time, and space for such leadership.