

NCEA Futures Summit, An Overview of Responses

National Community Education Association

Summit Held in Washington, D.C., February 22, 2007

On February 22, 2007, a distinguished group of leaders in education, business, government, and other fields joined the National Community Education Association's Board of Directors for an "NCEA Futures Summit." This key meeting-of-the-minds began with a presentation devoted to sixteen trends that are impacting the world, including communities and their schools. Participants were then asked to identify what they considered implications of the trends for community education and NCEA, to speculate on issues facing the field, and to develop a series of ideals for community education as it moves into the future. The following is brief overview of ideas generated at that summit.

Ideals or Characteristics...Community Education of the Future, Gap Analysis

In small groups, summit participants were asked not to be limited by current obstacles and to use their creativity, imagination, and ingenuity in describing what community education might strive to become in the future. Then, they rated where community education currently stands in relationship to each of those ideals (1=low, 10=high). (Where individual community education programs stand in relationship to each ideal or characteristic would likely vary from one community to another.) Noting differences between the ideal and current reality, community educators are encouraged to consider how to close the gap. The following is a brief summary of those ideals or characteristics and how each was ranked.

- **Community education will be the catalyst for engagement in each community. It should be seen as the weave in the fabric of society.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2
- **Every school will be a community learning center operating under a community education philosophy.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2-3
- **Community education will provide the framework for lifelong learning.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 5-6
- **A national Department of Community Education will be created with representation in each state. A key purpose would be to build the capacities of communities.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 1
- **Community education will provide a balance among social, economic, and educational forces that make up the fabric of community life.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2
- **Employing the philosophy of community education, every child will start school prepared--and ready for success. No child will start behind!**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 3
- **At the state level, community education will reflect partnering that is consistent with community education philosophy and each community's capacity.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 5
- **Community education will contribute to the ongoing development, replenishment, recruitment, and engagement of community leaders.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 4
- **Every school will have a trained community education coordinator, and every superintendent will have been involved in community schools training.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 1
- **Community education programs will be flexible and readily adaptable to each specific community.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 7
- **State, local, and federal matching funds will be available for community education.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2
- **Youth will be prominently represented in programs for leadership development.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 3
- **Community education and community educators will help education systems become conveners for change.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2
- **Every community strategic plan will view schools as a central convening point for the future.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 1
- **Comprehensive systemic needs assessments will respond to local needs and include a focus on appropriate business, economic, and health services.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2

- **Every community member will have access to resources that will help them to become or remain successful.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 2
- **Schools will be viewed as a primary resource for addressing community needs.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 4
- **Every college or university with an education department will have a community education component.**
Current Rating on 1 to 10 Scale: 1

Further Implications of the Sixteen Trends for NCEA and Community Education

Sixteen trends served as a macro environmental scan of political, economic, social, technological, environmental, demographic, and other forces impacting the world, each nation, each community, and every education system. The following are a few of the many implications for community education and NCEA that were identified during the summit.

- Community education should become a catalyst for change in the education system.
- Redefinition may be needed. Community education will need to be more clearly defined. NCEA and state organizations will need a more defined, distinct focus or purpose and a clearer definition of the roles of members and potential members. Even the definition of "community" and the "role of schools" should be redefined.
- The community should be seen as an extension of the classroom.
- Community educators and NCEA should assist schools in becoming true community learning centers.
- Consensus building will become an essential in each community to bring people together in common purpose.
- Needs that are not getting attention from existing organizations should be identified and addressed.
- Training will be needed to help educators become even more adept at reaching out to the broader community.
- Centers might be formed in communities to bring together and tap the expertise and skills of older citizens, including legions of retiring Baby Boomers. Intergenerational collaboration will become essential.
- Retirees should be integrated into school and community affairs, providing ongoing two-way mentoring.
- Access to resources and networks should be provided for those who have limited or no community connections.
- The association should provide relevant, well-defined services and experiences for its members. An attempt should be made to develop even more young community education professionals and attract them as NCEA members.
- Technology should be used as a mechanism for growth. It should help address diversity and bring earning potential to more people. The impact of technology on the total community, including children, is an important, ongoing consideration. Technology should be integrated into delivering NCEA services to members.
- NCEA might need to identify more potential partners to work with the organization. Networking with universities, associations, and other "allies" should lead to increased collaboration.
- Schools and colleges must see education and learning as a way to rally and strengthen their communities.
- Community educators should make sure appropriate training is provided for community leaders.
- Those who are poor should be exposed to resources that help them break the cycle of poverty.
- Clearinghouses should be developed that provide a source of information about how young people can be civically involved and connected to real-world experiences that make a difference in their personal lives and in society.

Issues Facing Community Education and NCEA

Participants in the summit identified nearly 35 issues they believe should be clarified and addressed by community educators and NCEA. A few of those issues that ranked 90 percent or greater in probability and generally high in impact are: the need for common definitions and understandings; organizational role and identity; funding; professional development; declining membership; resegregation of communities; fragmentation of community education among related organizations; legislative presence and advocacy; the building of partnerships; and a lack of school policies related to the ideals of community education.

Note: This brief summary provides only a few representative comments that grew from the February 2007 NCEA Futures Summit. A more complete report is in preparation. We encourage everyone to study the list of sixteen trends accompanying this overview, review the implications, and consider others that may not have been identified during the summit. Think about each of the listed ideals or characteristics for community education in the future. Examine not only the rank those at the summit provided, but also consider your own. Then, if possible, identify additional ideals or characteristics. Review the partial list of issues and suggest others that community educators and NCEA might need to consider and address. Help us create a future for NCEA and community education.

This *NCEA Futures Summit Overview* was published by the National Community Education Association, 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91-A, Fairfax, VA 22030-2405, phone 703-359-8975, www.ncea.com. Gary Marx, president of the Center for Public Outreach in Vienna, VA, spoke to the summit about societal trends, facilitated discussions, and prepared this overview of the full report. He can be reached at gmarxcpo@aol.com.

National Community Education Association

Feedback on Ideals/Characteristics, Implications of Trends, and Issues

The National Community Education Association held an NCEA Futures Summit, February 22, 2007, in Washington, D.C. Those involved included a distinguished group of leaders in education, business, government, and other fields. They were joined by the organization's Board of Directors. During that historic meeting, participants identified a series of ideals or characteristics describing how community education might be described in the future. They also considered implications of trends and identified issues they believe NCEA and community education is or will be facing.

Your Help Needed: Review the *NCEA Futures Summit Overview*. That brief publication contains a condensation of an even greater number of items that will be included in a full report on the summit. Then, individually, or in a plenary or small group setting at a meeting you are holding, provide the following information for NCEA's future consideration. Your thoughts will help the organization tap the ideas of members, guide its strategic vision, and provide counsel for the development or improvement of products and services.

Assignment 1: Consider items included in the "Ideals or Characteristics...Community Education of the Future" section of the overview.

- A. Examine the rating of how reality compares to each listed ideal using a scale of one (low) to ten (high). If you generally agree with the summit's rating of the item, circle it. If you believe a different rating would be more appropriate, write it beside the item.
- B. Using complete sentences, share up to three additional ideals or characteristics that you believe should describe community education in the future. Then, rate each one in comparison to your view of current nationwide reality.

Characteristic/Ideal 1:

How would you currently rate how community education is doing in reaching or exemplifying this ideal?
(Circle one of these numbers.) Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Characteristic/Ideal 2:

How would you currently rate how community education is doing in reaching or exemplifying this ideal?
(Circle one of these numbers.) Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Characteristic/Ideal 3:

How would you currently rate how community education is doing in reaching or exemplifying this ideal?
(Circle one of these numbers.) Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Assignment 2: Review the list of sixteen trends. Then consider the "Further Implications of the Sixteen Trends for NCEA and Community Education." Please list any additional implications you would like to share.

Implication:

Implication:

Implication:

Assignment 3: Examine the overview's list of "Issues Facing Community Education and NCEA." This is just a partial list of the many issues identified at the summit. Please share with us from one to three additional issues you believe community education and the association are facing.

Issue:

Issue:

Issue:

Please return this completed feedback form to the National Community Education Association, 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A, Fairfax, Virginia 22030-2401, USA, phone 703-359-8973. Email: brobertson@ncea.com. At the top, include your name, position, organization, address, and both phone and email addresses.