

## NSRF Journal Reader Survey

Thanks to all of you who responded to the electronic survey we posted on-line after the publication of our first issue of *Connections*. Articles from *Connections* are being used around the country for text based discussion, it has been slipped into the hands of numerous principals “to give weight” to the work we do, and it is connecting people to the work nationally.

Most of you preferred the mix of content that we tried for in the first issue as opposed to a theme. We will continue to work on finding a good balance of topics. Your continued feedback is essential to this process and we will post another survey later on down the line to get more input from you.

Some suggestions for future issues include: spotlighting specific schools with strong CFG cultures, parent involvement, accountability and CFGs, new protocols or adaptation of protocols, an annotated map, and how people are documenting their work.

We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions. We hope that you enjoy this issue.

## CONNECTIONS

is a journal of the National School Reform Faculty. Published three times per year by the Harmony School Education Center, it provides a forum for CFG coaches and other reflective educators to share their practice.

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If you have any feedback or are interested in contributing to *Connections* contact us at 812/330.2702  
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## *Schools with Spirit: Nurturing the Inner Lives of Children and Teachers:*

A Book Review – Deborah Bambino, Pennsylvania

Anyone who has worked with me in the last eight months has heard about this book! I seem to carry it to all my meetings; whether it's a new coaches' training, a small schools' session or a meeting about the crisis in the schools here in Philadelphia, I find myself returning to this book for a quote or story that seems to fit the occasion.

In this book of essays edited by Linda Lantieri, “Fourteen respected educators ask whether schools can nurture the inner life of students without violating the beliefs of families or the separation of church and state.”

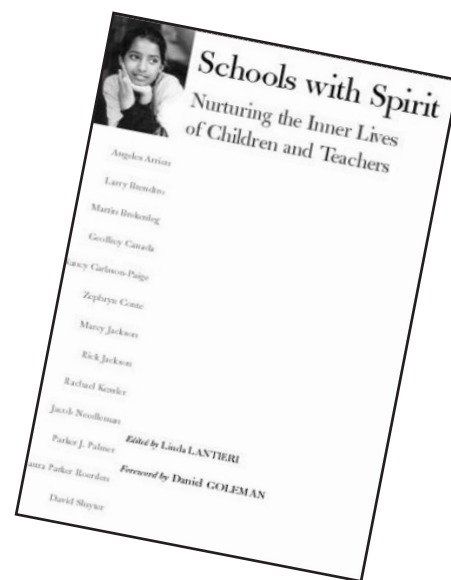
The “spirit” that's talked about in the title doesn't refer to a particular religion or set of beliefs; it doesn't mean the “School Spirit” we experience when we have a winning sports team, either. The spirit talked about in this powerful little book is embedded in the belief that “schools are active and alive organisms that place the highest value on self-knowledge, healthy interpersonal relationships, and building community (Lantieri, 2001).”

While I could describe what this book has meant to me, I think you'd find it more valuable if I let the words speak for themselves. Here are a few of the quotes that have pushed my thinking and practice this year:

On the need to set norms: “What are the conditions or agreements you need so you can be fully yourself here—so you can take risks to grow and learn, so you can talk about what matters deeply to you?”

An at risk-youth made the comment that “The arts activities created an equality and freedom I have never experienced in quite as safe and pleasurable a way.”

Another troubled youth said: “I think nature has a much stronger voice in my life today...it is the voice of restraint, the voice of practicality, the voice of kindness. Sometimes it keeps me from doing something I might want to do...other times it



makes me feel good about what I am doing.”

A Lakota author shared his grandfather's views: “The Europeans believed that Indian children were little primitives in need of socialization. In reality they had brought with them a backward theory of child development, one that assumed that children were evil and had to be punished into submission...At the core of this punitive mind set is a view where saying ‘You are acting like a child’ is interpreted as an insult...In the Lakota tongue, this phrase would be, “You are acting like a sacred being.”

A teacher spoke of “Giving students the skills to dive down into the deep well that is uniquely their own, to meet at the underground stream that connects us all...”

I urge you all to dive deeply into this book; you won't be disappointed! ❖

*Linda Lantieri, editor,  
and Daniel P. Goleman (2001). Schools  
with Spirit: Nurturing the Inner Lives  
of Teachers and Children.  
Beacon Press.*

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