

# Foreword

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**J**ames Comer and colleagues at the Yale School Development Program (SDP) have made an enormous difference in schools and school districts across the country over the past three decades. There is a wealth of knowledge, insight, strategies, and lessons contained within the range of experiences of SDP parents, community members, students, teachers, staff, principals, districts, and other leaders. The beauty of the *Comer Schools in Action* set is that its three volumes have now given us access to this wealth of knowledge and ideas in one place. This collection is of inestimable value.

The first book lays the foundation: child development = education. *Six Pathways to Healthy Child Development and Academic Success* establishes the mission and vision. What we have here is a fundamental agenda for social reform.

*Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development* then shows the Comer Process in action, making it clear that we are talking about systemic reform. The elements of reform are clearly set forth: the role of schools and districts, the need for integrated planning and curriculum, the careful focus on implementation, how teamwork drives and sustains change, how school-university partnerships can be developed, and how assertive achievement-oriented leadership at the school and district levels is a system responsibility.

The third book, *Transforming School Leadership and Management to Support Student Learning and Development*, represents a complete guide for how to introduce and carry out the Comer Process. It shows us what is involved in making initial decisions, how to proceed through six essential steps in the planning process, and how to start and continue assessment and monitoring. All the key relationships are addressed, both inside and outside the school. An important chapter sets out the SDP implementation cycle chronologically, taking us through timelines and activities for planning, foundation building, transformation, institutionalization, and renewal.

All in all, the *Comer Schools in Action* trilogy gives us the entire essence of Comer's success and the lessons learned along the way. It is theoretical, practical, and filled with ideas and guidelines for action that integrate theory and practice. The Comer trilogy is a landmark contribution to the field of educational change.

—Michael Fullan  
*University of Toronto*