Philosophy

Personal Philosophy: Leadership in School and Community Relations My personal philosophy on leadership in school and community relations is guided by the concept that despite the public character of school and community we as citizens are stakeholders in the success and peaceful co-existence of the school as a public/community institution. As Bagin and Galleger (2005) inform, the school system, by nature of its " public character" is jointly owned by the community and its citizens (p. 10). However, ownership comes with responsibility. If that responsibility is going to be shared, frank and honest information relative to the school system is necessary for helping stakeholders establish informed opinions and perceptions and to share those thoughts to those responsible for the administration of the school. This personal philosophy emanates from the changes over the years which have moved away from publicity to " school public relations" and finally to the current concept of " school-community relations" (Bagin and Galleger 2005, p. 12). This is because, school as an intricate part of the community cannot adjust to transformations within the " social order" or make corresponding improvements in the delivery of its services without citizen participation (Bagin and Galleger 2005, p. 13). Leadership in school and community relations therefore aims to encourage participation by operating a transparent organization so that citizens and the community at large are fully informed. They in turn can share concerns and opinions among themselves and with the school administrators. As Bagin and Galleger (2005) inform, by taking this approach, citizens will grow to know the school directly and they are in a better position to participate in the administration of the school (p. 13). Citizen participation will naturally involve asking questions, sharing ideas, considering proposes projects and

taking a stance relative to important matters. In this regard, citizens will be integrated into the school's " decision-making process" that permits the school to keep up with changes in society and make the necessary " educational" transformations (Bagin and Galleger 2005, p. 13). The two-way symmetric public relations model is more effective for leadership in achieving the goal of community participation in the school system. The two-way symmetric public relations model promotes " mutual understanding" (Bagin and Galleger 2005, p. 14). It is based on obtaining an atmosphere in which both sides " understand each other's point of view" (Bagin and Galleger 2005, p. 15). This understanding can only be achieved by virtue of the free flow of information between the school and the community. In other words, leadership in the context of school and community relations means ensuring that the school communicates with its " external publics" in a structured method (Bagin and Galleger 2005, p. 119). This means that information must be fed to the community and received from the public in a manner that invites open communication. Newsletters and other forms of print media, radio and televisions will not be enough for communicating with the external publics. In addition face to face conferences calculated to ensure that the public is informed and updated relative to the school's affairs will have to be conducted. There are a number of methods by which leadership can facilitate face to face conferences and encourage interest in the functioning and success of the school on the part of members of the community. A number of regularly scheduled programs can accomplish this. The school assembly can act as a reservoir of information transmittal and can spur interest in the school. Other activities that can have the same purpose are school plays, commencement days, awards programs and

athletic events among others (Bagin and Galleger 2005, Ch. 8). Similarly, encouraging teachers to partner with parents can serve as a valuable source of communication for encouraging citizen participating and interest in the school system. In the final analysis, the school as a significant part of the community is virtually indistinguishable from the community. There are a number of ways in which information can be shared between the general community and the school for the success of the school and the welfare of the community. Bibliography Bagin, Don and Gallager, Donald, R. (2005). The School and Community Relations. (9th Ed.) MA: Allyn & Bacon.