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In this third book of our *Iron Cage* series, we look at the return of the idea of Community Schools and what it means in practice during the current neo-liberal ascendancy. Policy wonks, corporate think tanks and education officials can't seem get enough of them, which gives us good reasons to worry. But there is also room for some optimism here. The demand for Community Schools has genuine progressive support provided they stay true to their purpose. And in the struggle to keep them on course, we get a chance to rethink our schools as democratic institutions, uniting "really useful" learning and community development.

These articles explore both sides of the Community School reality in several Canadian provinces, Mexico, South Africa, the UK and Australia. They give examples of schools as genuine two-way community hubs and the thinking behind them. At the same time, they sound alarm bells as the human dimensions of community development are sidelined in the rush to impose a business model of corporate development.

Alongside this struggle for community in education, we face widespread closures of neighbourhood schools as part of the continuing financial cutbacks in public education. The good news – if we can organize around it – is that there is now a practical, democratic alternative to closing schools: the school as community hub. The idea is out there. Our job is to shape it in the service of education in schools that are there for all of us.

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To subscribe to *Our Schools/Our Selves*, contact:
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)
205-75 Albert St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7
Tel: 613.563.1341 Fax: 613.233.1458
ccpa@policyalternatives.ca
www.policyalternatives.ca



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The School as Community Hub

Beyond Education's Iron Cage



Hugo Aboites
Chris Bigum
Rita Bouvier
David Clandfield
Larry Kuehn
Richard Hatcher
Elise Houghton
Michael LeClaire
Leonie Rowan
Carol Anne Spreen
Salim Vally

Editors: David Clandfield
and George Martell



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