A Note from the Editors

We are pleased to present this special issue, the first under our editorial tenure at the University of Pennsylvania, featuring a set of articles collected by Joanne Larson and Nancy Ares of the University of Rochester and Kevin O’Connor of the University of Colorado. The issue explores the struggles, tensions, successes, and failures of a major community change initiative in a historically underserved urban community. The articles describe the multiyear ethnographic study of this initiative that Larson, Ares, O’Connor, and colleagues undertook in collaboration with community participants. The initiative was an ambitious one, seeking to coordinate efforts by the school district and individual schools, community and social service agencies, churches and nonprofit organizations, and business and local government, toward a goal of improving schooling and learning outcomes for children and youth. The guest editors and contributing authors analyze the various dimensions of the complex community change process, focusing on the tensions that arose and ultimately impeded accomplishment of the objectives. Of particular interest is their account of how community members lost agency and voice over the course of the community change planning process.

As is true for every article published in AEQ, each contribution in this special issue was peer reviewed by at least three anonymous external reviewers, and the issue as a whole also underwent anonymous peer review. We thank guest editors Larson, Ares, and O’Connor for conceptualizing and guiding the issue through the review and revision process. We hope that AEQ readers will, as we did, find the stories told here not just troubling but also illuminating in the ongoing quest for meaningful social change and educational futures for underserved urban children and youth.

—Nancy H. Hornberger, Editor
—Stanton E. F. Wortham, Associate Editor overseeing this special issue