



Pat Roy is co-author of *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003)

REFERENCES

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- Roy, P. & Hord, S. (2003).** *Moving NSDC's staff development standards into practice: Innovation configurations, Volume I.* Oxford, OH: NSDC.
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What do you expect?

An essential role for central office staff related to the Equity standard is to **communicate the district's high expectations for each student, teacher, and administrator** (Roy & Hord, 2003, p. 153.) High expectations means more than setting high goals and rigorous standards of performance; high expectations also means building systems of support so that district personnel have the capacity to attain those high standards. In part, it also means that central office staff believe that when principals and teachers develop the requisite skills and knowledge they will make a difference in the lives of students who have not typically been successful in school.

First, central office staff **create an ongoing system of staff learning to enhance teacher and administrator knowledge of and skills to teach struggling students.** A systemwide approach to improving instruction was one of the actions taken by high-poverty districts that were improving student achievement (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). These districts knew they would have to fundamentally change instructional practice to impact student learning and achievement.

Second, district staff **accept no excuses for a lack of achievement by subgroups of students.** The no-excuses attitude, according to Johnson (1999), means assuming that joint, collegial efforts can result in high levels of student achievement; knowing that there will be barriers but refusing to allow barriers to become excuses; and ensuring that high expectations are held for educators as well as students.

One strategy that can help schools target

learning and close the achievement gap is having central office **assist schools in analyzing disaggregated student learning data to determine the impact of programs on student learning — especially with struggling students.** The system helps schools identify whether their actions have made a difference.

District office staff also **share school data with the whole district in order to identify effective practices.** Assume the

existence of *positive deviance*: namely that a search of schools and classrooms will result in identifying teachers and students who are thriving and successful even if the school that surrounds them is not. Once these good examples have been identified, learn what they are doing that makes their results different.

Finally, district office staff **challenge colleagues' underlying assumptions concerning**

student learning and the role of parents, SES, race, and background. Central office staff begin by reflecting on their own beliefs and assumptions about what has a stronger influence on learning — external factors, such as SES or race, or high-quality instruction. Then, central office staff no longer accept statements like, *What do you expect? Do you see where these kids live?* They can counter with stories and research about schools and teachers who have beat the odds and accomplished high levels of learning for all students.

Working on equity issues has to be one of the hardest tasks for any district administrator. But, if district level staff begin to ask what educators expect of themselves and their students, they can begin to change the conversation into one that explores possibilities and not one that dwells on barriers.

Equity:

Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.