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Imagine if every interview included the following statement: "We expect that throughout each school year you will keep learning more about the content you teach and how to engage students more successfully in learning that content."

Read Hayes Mizell's collected columns at www.nsd.org/news/authors/mizell.cfm.

Establish professional learning expectations *before* day one

When a school system interviews a prospective new teacher, each party has different interests. The candidate wants a job, preferably one that meets his or her expectations regarding salary, benefits, grade level, subject, school, and working conditions. The school system wants a teacher who meets certain requirements regarding preservice education, certification, and experience.

The interviewer may be someone in the human resources department of the central office, or a principal, or both. Their conversation covers many topics, but the interviewer may fail to communicate a critical expectation. As part of the employment and induction process, school systems rarely focus on the prospective teacher's future development. There is an assumption that the teacher will participate in whatever professional development the school system requires, but this overlooks the larger issue of whether and to what extent the teacher is committed to his or her professional growth.

In contrast, imagine if every interview included the following statement:

"It appears you have talents and abilities that can foster the intellectual development of this community's children. But you should be aware that we also expect *you* to develop intellectually. We expect that throughout each school year you will keep learning more about the content you teach and how to engage students more successfully in learning that content.

"We expect you to engage your colleagues in figuring out how to improve classroom instruction, curriculum, assessment, and results. We expect you to seek out and test promis-

ing new ideas from your colleagues and others outside your school and this school system. We expect you to pursue your own new learning aggressively, and to apply what you learn to help raise the levels of your students' academic performance.

"We also expect that, as a member of your school community, you will support your colleagues in their learning. You will keep open your doors as they do theirs, so that you can openly observe and help one another as you refine your practice. We expect that you will be as committed to the learning of your peers' students

as you are to yours. Together, we all share collective responsibility for each and every student in the school.

"We will support you, and periodically we will be interested in seeing how your intellectual growth is making you a more effective teacher. And if you ever have reason to believe your school or this school system is doing anything that gets in the way of your intellectual

development or that of your students, it is your obligation to let us know about it. If you are not prepared to do these things, then perhaps you would be happier in another school system."

When interviewing candidates for teacher positions, does your school system or school forcefully and consistently communicate high expectations for educators' learning? Do you communicate the culture of collective responsibility that you expect in each school, with the commitment of each employee? And do you subsequently reinforce those expectations with support and practices that encourage and enable teachers to engage in effective professional learning every day? Now is the time.

Hayes Mizell writes frequently on NSDC's blog: www.nsd.org/learningblog/. Read Mizell's perspective and share yours in response. Engage the NSDC community in dialogue.