

## **theme** THE NEW CENTRAL OFFICE

### **A new definition in Atlanta:**

#### Q&A WITH BEVERLY HALL.

*By Tracy Crow*

During more than a decade leading Atlanta (Ga.) Public Schools, Superintendent Beverly Hall has sustained a focus on moving district leaders' attention to teaching and learning. As a result, the organization of the district's central office has undergone a transformation, and all educators work towards the strategic goals of the district. In her role, Hall continues to accelerate the push for better teachers, students exceeding standards, and a higher percentage of students graduating each year.

### **The can-do central office:**

#### WITH AN EYE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, ILLINOIS DISTRICT REDEFINES ITS ROLES AND GOALS.

*By Deanne Hillman and Donald S. Kachur*

Cultural changes contributed to a new relationship among school buildings and the central office in Decatur Public School District 61 (Ill.). When the district developed a service orientation and created professional learning communities, collaboration across buildings honed the district's focus on teaching and learning. Walk-throughs and a coaching model helped district leaders transition to roles as learning facilitators.

### **Central office and school leaders create a conversation.**

*By Sue McAdamis*

When a districtwide assessment of professional development helped educators in Rockwood School District (Eureka, Mo.) understand the need for change, they began with the fundamental process of holding meaningful conversations. Careful guidelines helped the district reshape professional learning to become results-driven, school-based, and job-embedded. Results indicate that students were the ultimate beneficiaries.

### **Road trip:**

#### JOURNEY TO IMPROVEMENT TAKES TWISTS AND TURNS.

*By Ellen S. Perconti*

It isn't enough to focus on attendance at professional learning experiences, as educators in the Lewiston (Idaho) School District learned. Shifting to expectations for implementation of learning was a difficult undertaking. Using persistence to underscore the connection between

adult and student learning, and inquiry to determine the optimal route, the district now focuses on continuous improvement.

### **Leadership practices accelerate into high speed.**

*By Dori Novak, Marceta Reilly, and Diana Williams*

When district leaders in Howard County, Md., recognized the need to differentiate professional learning for central office staff from that of school leaders, they turned to a coaching model. Participants learned a series of coach-like behaviors to use with educators and also investigated a continuum of leadership practices to use in tailoring their work with district educators.

### **Central office plants the seeds, schools cultivate their own learning.**

*By Valerie von Frank*

All schools in West Des Moines (Iowa) Community Schools share a common vision. Educators in each school, however, determine the best way to reach the district's goals, depending on their particular context and student needs. Collaboration among teachers, district leaders, and principals drives the district forward. Meanwhile, the district provides professional learning support through weekly collaborative time for schools and learning opportunities for principals and administrators.

### **Seaside culture change:**

#### FLORIDA DISTRICT CHANGES THE CENTRAL OFFICE TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.

*By Bette H. Zippin*

State laws in Florida mandated changes to how districts plan, implement, and evaluate professional learning. With a detailed set of standards to guide them, district leaders in Broward County Public Schools overhauled the culture and the structure of the district office to provide relevant leadership and support.

### **Whether a building or a state of mind, the central office must evolve.**

*By Hayes Mizell*

A new conceptualization of the central office with a focus on effective professional learning calls for several key changes. The superintendent must lead differently, the central office must shift away from how it has organized professional development in the past, and evaluation of professional learning is no longer an optional element.

## feature

### 6 steps to learning leadership.

By *Cathy A. Toll*

Principals who exhibit learning leadership focus on what and how educators learn. A framework of six elements can help school leaders support the teachers in their schools. Learning leaders attend to their expectations about teacher learning, provide demonstrations, nurture learning hospitality, create possibilities for learning, ask questions, and support the whole learner.

## columns

### Collaborative culture:

A CHANGE IN BELIEFS LEADS TO A CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR — AND IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

By *Susan Scott and Elaine Cash*

Making excuses for students who fall behind doesn't serve them — or their teachers. When a district leader engaged educators in honest conversation, she found that they could face reality together and move the district forward.

### Cultural proficiency:

ELIMINATE INEQUITIES TO TRANSFORM THE COLLEGE PREP PROCESS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

By *Sarah W. Nelson*  
and *Patricia L. Guerra*

Several specific culturally responsive practices can help educators, beginning at the elementary level, as they work to support students from diverse backgrounds to join their peers in the college preparation track in high school.

### From the director:

THE NEW CENTRAL OFFICE PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.

By *Stephanie Hirsh*

NSDC's purpose and definition call for new responsibilities for central offices, along with new opportunities.



## call for articles

**Theme:** Transforming professional learning:  
The journey

**Manuscript deadline:** Aug. 15, 2010

**Issue:** April 2011

**Theme:** Teacher leadership

**Manuscript deadline:** Oct. 15, 2010

**Issue:** June 2011

**Theme:** Standards for professional learning

**Manuscript deadline:** Dec. 15, 2010

**Issue:** Aug. 2011

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