



A learning school on every corner is the best pathway to student success

Schools, like professional development systems, are at different stages in achieving their intended outcomes. I look forward to a time when all schools are much further on their journey toward high achievement for all students.

When we launched the Learning School Alliance with the support of MetLife Foundation and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, I had a bold goal — that we would have what we call learning schools within two hours of driving for every school in North America. In learning schools, educators share collective responsibility for the success of all students by implementing the cycle of continuous improvement that is grounded in effective professional learning.

So far, we have hung Learning School Alliance banners outside 41 schools in 20 states, one Canadian province, and one territory. That banner and what happens within each building are our keys to ensuring great schools for all children. This is why I believe a learning school on every corner is our best pathway to student success.

- **Educators in learning schools see educator learning as equal in importance to student learning.** Staff members are familiar with the research

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that says the most important school-based factor that influences student learning is quality teaching. They know the most powerful strategy they have to improve teaching is ongoing professional learning. Therefore, professional learning is part of what defines their work on a daily basis and shapes their responsibilities as a professional educator.

- **Educators in learning schools share collective responsibility for the success of every student.** Designated teams meet regularly to track and monitor student success. Staff members talk about each student's success and what the team and school are doing to ensure it. They regard every student as their student.

- **Educators in learning schools are committed to ensuring great teaching for every student every day.** Every staff member understands that students are only as successful as the quality of teaching they experience. The staff recognizes the constant infusion of new knowledge and skills as necessary to strengthen instruction. They know that ensuring high-quality teaching each day is a continuous process.

- **Educators in learning schools make decisions based on data and results.** All staff members are skillful in using data to determine future learning needs for both students and themselves. They examine data regularly to assess

the impact of decisions and determine what course of action to take. Student achievement is the bottom line.

- **Educators in learning schools gather in teams for collaborative professional learning as a regular part of their workday.** Collaborative professional learning means students benefit from the wisdom and expertise of all teachers in a grade level or subject rather than just their own teachers. Teams spread the best ideas systematically from classroom to classroom.

- **Educators in learning schools regard the principal as the chief learner.**

The principal prioritizes his or her own learning and demonstrates that commitment by participating in schoolwide learning, selected team-based learning activities, and learning with other principals. The principal can describe for the community his or her own learning goals and how they relate to the school goals. The principal documents the impact of the learning journey on the staff and students.

I invite all members to examine how investments in learning for both students and staff are transforming the way educators work. In my vision, visitors will walk away believing that every student and teacher deserves to go to a learning school and will take steps to create this reality in every community. ■

