



As leaders in many fields demonstrate, learning is the lever for change

Think about a range of people widely considered to be leaders: Abraham Lincoln, Helen Keller, Mahatma Gandhi. One thing such leaders have in common is their role in making change happen. Through their actions, leaders manage to change

what people believe and the actions they take, often in difficult conditions. And the lever they use to bring about change, at its root, is learning. Leaders help others understand a new set of data, accomplish a challenging goal, imagine a new possibility, or recognize the injustice of long-

held beliefs. The leaders we would name in our field, school system, or local community do the very same.

Some leaders promote learning — and, in turn, bring about change — by modeling the behaviors and beliefs they promote. Picture Rosa Parks taking a stand, putting herself in danger as she made a statement about what she

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considered to be right. Some leaders advocate with passion for their beliefs, using their chosen pulpit to influence others through their words. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches live on for decades as inspiration. Still others push change forward by establishing new ways of operating and new policies. Consider entrepreneurial or technological innovators, for example: Henry Ford or Steve Jobs. Such leaders create pathways that will help those who follow envision still more innovation.

The Leadership standard articulates that professional learning requires leadership along all three of those dimensions: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Learning Forward Scholar Laureate Shirley Hord, as passionate an advocate for professional learning as you'll find anywhere, reminds us again and again that learning is change. The leaders who manage to connect learning to their goals have the power to move ideas and people forward.

As with every standard, fulfilling all aspects of the Leadership standard requires particular skills and knowledge. Systems that recognize this invest in developing such knowledge through professional learning for leaders themselves.

In this issue of *JSD*, the last in

a series covering each of the seven standards in depth, read about the many roles leaders fill to support professional learning that leads to results. Read Hayes Mizell (p. 46) as he urges leaders to speak up for what works in professional learning. Explore as well the learning that ensures leaders' continuous growth, whether they learn through individual study or collaborative investigation. Anthony Muhammad has benefited from both, as you'll read on p. 16. Networks or communities, formed by learners themselves (see p. 37) and supported by more formal infrastructures (see p. 32), underlie much of the valuable learning leaders describe. The Wallace Foundation's research offers lessons for improving leadership training (see p. 24).

We offer special thanks to two long-standing *JSD* and professional learning leaders in this issue. Patricia Guerra and Sarah Nelson have shared their insights on developing cultural proficiency in *JSD* since 2007. Their columns have sensitively addressed fundamentally human topics with both wisdom and pragmatism. We appreciate their contribution and will miss their voices.

We also thank MetLife Foundation for its ongoing support of the Standards for Professional Learning and related resources. The foundation's support assists Learning Forward to continue to develop and disseminate useful tools to deepen understanding and application of the standards. ■



Centerpiece of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, D.C.