



## SMARTER SPENDING

### A New Vision for Teacher Professional Growth & Support: Six Steps to a More Powerful School System Strategy

*Education Resource Strategies, June 2013*

With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Education Resource Strategies combined research, past experience with urban districts, and analysis of three different school systems — Duval County, Fla.; Washington, D.C.; and charter network Achievement First — to identify six steps school system leaders can take to rethink their approach to teacher professional development. This includes ideas on how to shift resources from outdated models to promising practices without adding expensive new programs. Accompanying the report is a set of tools, including a self-assessment checklist, budget-focused worksheets, and case studies, to help districts assess their use of professional development dollars and consider ways to allocate them more effectively.

[www.erstrategies.org/library/a\\_new\\_vision\\_for\\_pgs](http://www.erstrategies.org/library/a_new_vision_for_pgs)

## ENGAGING TEACHERS

### Beyond Buy-In: Partnering with Practitioners to Build a Professional Growth and Accountability System for Denver's Educators

*Aspen Institute, June 2013*

LEAP, which stands for Leading Effective Academic Practice, is Denver Public Schools' new system for developing and evaluating effective teaching. Instead of designing the program in the central office first and then encouraging educators to buy into the new system, the district engaged teachers and principals in every step of the program's design, development, and rollout. Since then, the district has used a variety of strategies to incorporate educators' experiences and ideas into the program's ongoing development. *Beyond Buy-In* investigates how Denver's approach unfolded and how it can inform the work of system leaders nationwide.

[www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/DocumentDetail?documentId=1761&download](http://www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/DocumentDetail?documentId=1761&download)

## MEASURING STUDENT SKILLS

### Criteria for Higher-Quality Assessment

*Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, June 2013*

Based on the changing demands of today's workforce, advances in other nations, and original analysis, this report provides a set of criteria for high-quality student assessments. Assessment developers, policymakers, and educators can use the criteria to create and adopt assessments that promote deeper learning of 21st-century skills that students need to succeed in today's knowledge-based economy. The five criteria include: assessment of higher-order thinking skills; high-fidelity assessment; international benchmarking; instructionally sensitive assessments; and assessments that are valid, reliable, and fair.

<http://edpolicy.stanford.edu/publications/pubs/847>



## BLENDED LEARNING BENEFITS

### Improving Conditions & Careers: How Blended Learning Can Improve the Teaching Profession

*Digital Learning Now!, May 2013*

The authors assert that blended learning can create more and better opportunities for teacher collaboration, enable differentiated staffing, and boost meaningful professional development. The report explains how shifts to online and blended learning expand career options for teachers and outlines three ways in which digital learning creates these opportunities. The last section of the report covers policy enablers for blended learning, including funding, evaluation, pay/career options, operations, timing and scalability, and performance incentives.

[www.digitallearningnow.com/dln-smart-series](http://www.digitallearningnow.com/dln-smart-series)



**ONLINE VS. FACE-TO-FACE****Comparing the Impact of Online and Face-to-Face Professional Development in the Context of Curriculum Implementation***Journal of Teacher Education, July 2013*

Online teacher professional development has the same effect on student learning and teacher behavior as more traditional face-to-face models, according to a study published by the *Journal of Teacher Education*. In an *Education Week* blog, Benjamin Herold reports that the study compared the experiences of teachers charged with implementing a new high school environmental science curriculum. One group participated in 48 hours of face-to-face workshops over six days, while their counterparts worked at their own pace through an online workshop covering the same content. In both groups, researchers found, "Teachers reported increased confidence with new curriculum materials, enacted those materials consistently with curriculum designers' intent, and their students learned from curriculum successfully and in equal amounts."

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/DigitalEducation/2013/06/no\\_difference\\_between\\_online\\_a.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/DigitalEducation/2013/06/no_difference_between_online_a.html)

<http://jte.sagepub.com>

**DIGITAL TOOLS****From Chalkboard to Tablets: The Digital Conversion of the K-12 Classroom***Speak Up, April 2013*

Teachers and principals are becoming increasingly comfortable using online tools to hone their professional skills and are turning to options from social networking to web-based classes to do so, according to a study from Project Tomorrow. The survey found that the number of principals who said they support professional growth through some form of social networking more than tripled, from 8% in 2008 to 25% today. The portion of teachers who reported using social networking tools also jumped from 22% to 39% during that time.

[www.tomorrow.org/speakup/SU12\\_DigitalConversion\\_EducatorsReport.html](http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/SU12_DigitalConversion_EducatorsReport.html)

**IMPROVING MATH SCORES****Collective Pedagogical Teacher Culture and Mathematics Achievement:****Differences by Race, Ethnicity, and Socioeconomic Status**  
*Sociology of Education, April 2013*

Many elementary students' math performance improves when their teachers collaborate, work in professional learning communities, or do both, yet most students don't spend

all of their elementary school years in these settings, according to a study by UNC Charlotte researchers. The research shows that some schools have developed strong professional communities but have not fostered an environment where teachers are constantly working together to plan lessons and discuss student needs. Other schools have collaborative planning and teaching but teachers do not feel that they are part of a professional community. Few schools have effectively developed both. Study findings suggest that school leaders have the power to enhance math test scores and reduce gaps in scores across groups of students by encouraging community and professional teamwork, the authors said.

<http://soe.sagepub.com/content/86/2/174>

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**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH**

*JSD* is published six times a year to promote improvement in the quality of professional learning as a means to improve student learning in K-12 schools. Contributions from members and nonmembers of Learning Forward are welcome.

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JOURNAL OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT  
ISSN 0276-928X

*JSD* is a benefit of membership in Learning Forward. \$89 of annual membership covers a year's subscription to *JSD*. *JSD* is published bimonthly. Periodicals postage paid at Wheelersburg, OH 45694 and additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *JSD*, 504 S. Locust St., Oxford, OH 45056.

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