



Standards serve as guideposts for today's central office

One of my favorite jobs was when I was the free enterprise consulting teacher for the Richardson (Texas) Independent School District. I had a hefty budget to buy resources and plan events for teachers, and a lot of autonomy with little accountability. I introduced teachers to new programs, and we raised funds to build Enterprise City, a hands-on learning experience for all 4th and 7th graders to experience the free enterprise system. Almost 30 years later, it remains a valued part of the social studies curriculum throughout the Dallas area.

Then I became director of professional development, another position I loved because of the opportunity to continue to serve teachers. The freedom that I had in both positions would not look the same today — and I wouldn't want it to. Frankly, other than Enterprise City, little evidence remains of the investments we made in those days.

Fast-forward 25 years: My daughter, Leslie Ceballos, has a new job supporting teachers from the district office. Leslie's transition to this new opportunity prompted me to share with her what I consider the most important responsibilities for someone in her role.

When I worked in the central office,

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one of my primary responsibilities was providing a wide range of resources. While it will be important for Leslie to provide helpful resources, she has a greater responsibility to examine how people, time, and technology resources are aligned to support student, teaching, and program standards, and make shifts as needed.

I also know that Leslie will need to plan and lead workshops during the day and after school. But, more importantly, she'll participate as a member and facilitator of job-embedded learning communities, both in the central office and in schools. She'll need to support learning teams in ongoing cycles of continuous improvement as a core element of her work.

Leslie will surely be visiting classrooms and sharing expertise to help teachers improve. She'll use pre-and post observation protocols to provide focused feedback and be responsible throughout the year for individual and team support for implementing new strategies.

As our conversation continued, I realized I was, as usual, making my way through the Standards for Professional Learning, but this time considering the role someone in today's central office plays in a comprehensive professional learning system. If I were to make my way through all seven standards, I'd advise Leslie on the importance of developing leadership skills, becoming a data use expert, understanding deeply



how adults learn, and using student and teacher outcomes to plan all learning.

The fact that I see those standards as the guideposts to Leslie's work each day represents the biggest shift between how I operated in the central office 25 years ago and what she does today. While I certainly aspired to offer teachers in my district what they needed to excel, professional development was at best a nice benefit for employees.

Today, professional learning is a key component of an educator's work, and therefore Leslie's most important responsibility is ensuring that every teacher she supports has access to effective professional learning every day. Effective professional learning and support is essential to ensuring every student experiences great teaching every day. And when you are given the opportunity to support that, then you will remember this as your favorite job ever. ■