JSD

LEARNING PARTNERS STRENGTHEN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP p. 12

Why teachers make good learning leaders p. 26

PATHWAYS

TO LEADERSHIP
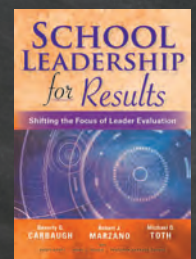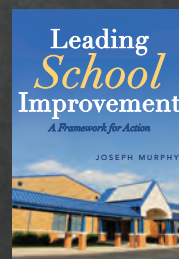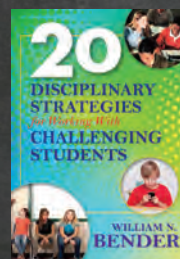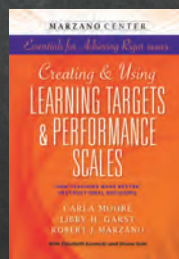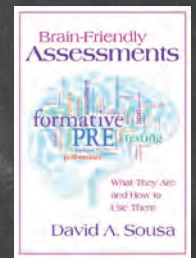
Turn effective practice into common practice p. 18

LESSONS FROM RESEARCH: High-quality collaboration benefits teachers and students p. 62

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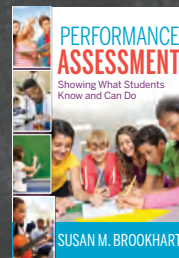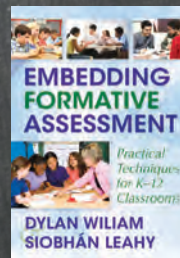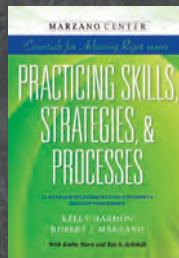
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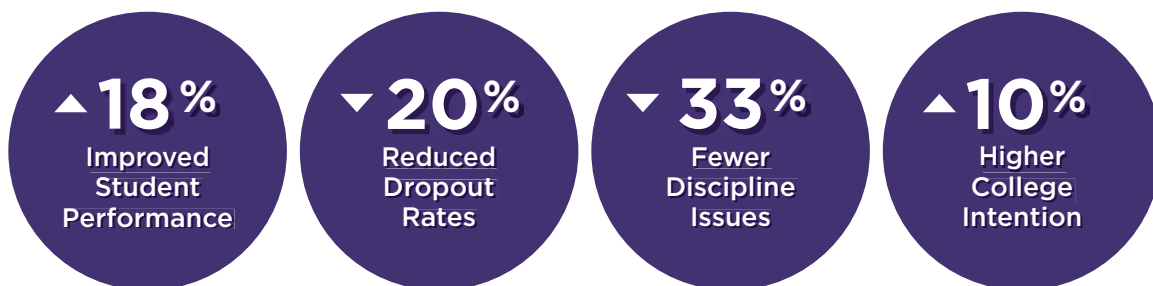
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The Learning Forward Journal

theme:
PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP

OCTOBER 2015,
VOLUME 36, NO. 5

features

What leaders say that makes a difference

'm fortunate to work in an organization that not only explores what leadership means in many contexts — as evidenced by this issue of *JSD* and other publications — but also nurtures leadership qualities among its staff and members. I've observed that the words leaders use are essential to how they develop themselves and others as leaders. The right words at the right times open doors and contribute to growth-oriented cultures.

I've seen that when effective leaders talk, they use these words and phrases.

YES. Professionals developing their leadership qualities say yes to requests from those who ask them for help. They know it is wise to show they are willing to pitch in where they are needed. They also say yes to challenges that are daunting, that they might not be quite ready for. Only through saying yes in the face of such risks do they give themselves permission to stretch and grow. Offering new leaders the chance to yes to stretch goals is a key responsibility for those in charge.

NO. No can be difficult for leaders to say, particularly aspiring leaders. No is just as important as yes. Saying no shows that you have a guiding vision as a leader and you know what will serve

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Tracy Crow (tracy.crow@ learningforward.org) is director of communications for Learning Forward.

that vision and what won't. Saying no demonstrates that you place your highest priorities first and won't let distractions rule the day.

I NEED HELP. Leaders sometimes hesitate to admit they can't tackle everything they've undertaken. Yet in order to be successful, effective leaders turn to their teams for support all the time. Fortunately, calling on others multiplies their opportunities for growth as well. Leaders may also think twice about saying I don't know unless they have their continuous learner mindset in gear.

WHAT DO OTHERS THINK ABOUT THIS? Inviting colleagues to contribute their points of view both nurtures their leadership development and shows that you value a range of perspectives during a discussion or decision-making process. Providing opportunities to practice speaking up in safe environments is critical to helping others develop their leader voice.

HERE'S WHAT I THINK ABOUT THIS. Effective leaders have a point of view, and they share it with their colleagues. They model speaking up and articulating a perspective such that others can make meaning of it. They also model hearing input around an idea when the time is right for conversation, and stating clearly if they're making a decision when that is the case.

I'M SORRY. Successful leaders admit their mistakes. They don't make excuses. They help others understand how they will fix their errors. They also share what they've learned from their mistakes; breakdowns are a prime learning opportunity and leaders take advantage of every opportunity to improve.

LET'S CELEBRATE. Leaders eager to nurture others on their learning journeys acknowledge accomplishments publicly and share credit for notable achievements. They look for opportunities to celebrate leadership in every corner of the organization, and they encourage others to do the same. Amplifying leadership actions contributes to a growth-oriented culture.

What else do effective leaders say when they communicate with their colleagues? What has worked for you? I know that I need to say "let's celebrate" more often — there are so many accomplishments worth shouting about. I also know that my yes/no balance always needs work. What do you wish you said more often? ■

essentials

SAFEGUARDING DATA
Student Data Principles

High-quality education data are essential for improving students' achievement in school and preparing them for success in life. When effectively used, these data can empower educators and families with the information they need to make decisions to help all learners succeed. In fall 2014, the Data Quality Campaign and the Consortium for School Networking convened a coalition of national education organizations to address concerns about student data privacy and equip educators with the ability to effectively use and protect student information. Together they developed 10 Student Data Principles for schools and districts to use to guide their data policies and practices.
**http://studentdataprinciples.org/
the-principles**

MATH AND THE COMMON CORE
Math Matters: How the Common Core Will Help the United States Bring Up Its Grade on Mathematics Education
Center for American Progress, August 2015

The Common Core State Standards add conceptual math to the traditional procedural way math is taught, allowing students to gain both mathematical fluency and skill proficiency. The Center for American Progress recommends several strategies for states and districts to smooth the transition, including providing high-quality, ongoing, and readily available professional learning that allows teachers to internalize the standards with the help of effective instructors. States should also develop a standards translation guide for teachers.
**www.americanprogress.
org/issues/education/
report/2015/08/13/119239/math-
matters**

EDUCATOR BLOG
Ed Praxis: Philosophy in Action
Jordan Tinney

Jordan Tinney, superintendent of Surrey School District in British Columbia, Canada, created his blog to link educational research to practice in schools, particularly in British Columbia. His goal is to generate a forum for how research can influence practice and vice versa. Articles are intended to stimulate thinking for anyone in education, particularly school and district leaders. Topics include the connection between letter grades and performance, the meaning of inclusion, innovation versus transformation, and preparing students for the real world.
www.jordantinney.org

FOCUS ON PRINCIPALS
**Making Time
for Instructional Leadership**
The Wallace Foundation, July 2015

This three-volume report describes the SAM process, an approach that about 700 schools around the nation are using to direct more of principals' time and effort to improve teaching and learning in classrooms. Principals often find themselves mired in matters of day-to-day administration and have little time to cultivate better teaching. The SAM process is designed to free up principals' time so they can focus on improving instruction in classrooms. This series investigates the SAM approach, describes how it has changed, and examines the feasibility of a randomized controlled trial to understand its effects.
**www.wallacefoundation.org/
knowledge-center/school-
leadership/principal-training/
Pages/Making-Time-for-
Instructional-Leadership.aspx**

HIGH-QUALITY LESSONS
Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products
Achieve, 2015

EQuIP is an initiative designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Its goals are to increase the supply of high-quality materials available to elementary, middle, and high school teachers and build the capacity of educators to evaluate and improve the quality of instructional materials. EQuIP builds on a collaborative effort of education leaders from Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island. Resources available include rubrics and feedback forms, e-learning modules, student work protocols, and exemplars.
www.achieve.org/EQuIP
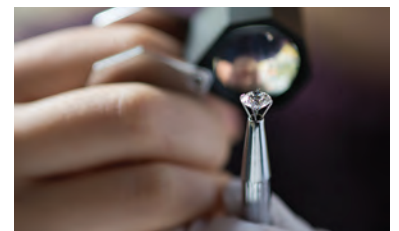
STRATEGIES FOR DEEPER LEARNING
Deeper Learning: Improving Student Outcomes for College, Career, and Civic Life
American Institutes for Research, August 2015

Deeper learning delivers rich core content to students in innovative ways that allow them to learn and then apply what they have learned. A recent study by American Institutes for Research found that students in deeper learning schools performed better than similar students on a range of measures. Given those results, this report says that states should consider instituting strategies to increase deeper learning opportunities for all students. Policymakers can support deeper learning by building teacher capacity, promoting innovation and personalization, and enabling greater flexibility at the local level.
**http://educationpolicy.air.org/
publications/deeper-learning-
improving-student-outcomes-
college-career-and-civic-life**

TEACHER VOICES
**'We Always Want To Get Better':
Teachers' Voices on Professional Development**
MDRC, June 2015

Through the Innovative Professional Development (iPD) Challenge, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has invested in helping school districts and networks redesign professional development systems to serve educators better and improve student performance. MDRC's evaluation of the iPD Challenge involves case studies and multiple rounds of surveys, document collection, and interviewing during the first three years of the initiative. This brief introduces the case study component of the evaluation and presents early findings from interviews with teachers on their beliefs about instructional improvement and useful learning opportunities.
**www.mdrc.org/sites/default/
files/2015_iPD_%20Teachers_
Voices.pdf**

LEADING CHANGE
The 8-Step Process for Leading Change
Kotter International, 2015

In 1996, John Kotter's Leading Change introduced his 8-Step Process for Leading Change. Now Kotter has updated and expanded the scope of his process. An e-book that can be downloaded free from the Kotter International website outlines each step, explaining the contexts for the two versions. A set of diagnostic questions helps users identify their organization's specific barriers to change as well as ways to overcome them.
**www.kotterinternational.com/the-
8-step-process-for-leading-change**

powerful WORDS

"Leadership and learning are indispensible to each other."

— *John F. Kennedy*

"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

— *Peter Drucker*

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."

— *Margaret Fuller*

"The trust of the people in the leaders reflects the confidence of the leaders in the people."

— *Paulo Freire*

LEADERSHIP BASICS

How *Leadership Influences Student Learning,* a review of research supported by The Wallace Foundation, established that the quality of school leadership is second only to that of teacher effectiveness in impacting student achievement. The report outlines three basics of successful leadership. Consider what these mean for different educational and organization contexts.

1	**SET DIRECTIONS.**
	These leadership actions help colleagues develop shared vision and purpose. Compelling goals help professionals stay motivated and find their sense of identity within an organization.
2	**DEVELOP PEOPLE.**
	Not only do individuals need a sense of purpose where they work, they need to develop their knowledge and skills to do the work. Successful leaders provide essential support to increase the capacity of others.
3	**REDESIGN THE ORGANIZATION.**
	Effective leaders also attend to the culture and infrastructure of schools, districts, or organizations. Otherwise, organizational conditions can "prevent the use of effective practices" (Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K., 2004, p. 8).

Source: Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning.* New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation.
Available at www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx.

IN THIS ISSUE OF *JSD*
THE LEARNING STARTS HERE ▼

If you're interested in …	Start with the article on page …
Teacher leadership	26
Principal leadership	12, 34
Central office leadership	22
Building leadership skills	18, 34, 40
One person's story	30, 44, 67, 72
Strategies for change	48
E-learning	54

LEARNING FORWARD'S LEADERSHIP STANDARD

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.**

Source: Learning Forward. (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning.* Oxford, OH: Author.

YOUR *NEXT* STEPS

While some educators intentionally develop their own leadership skills and qualities, others pick up leadership behaviors here and there or find that others have seen them as leaders for years. As you consider your leadership journey, use these questions on your own or with others to explore how you might take your next leadership steps or help others to do so.

My leadership journey started when I:

I believe others see me as a leader because I:

Some leaders who inspire me are:

The leadership qualities I admire most in others include:

The people or elements that have helped me grow are:

The leadership qualities I need to develop or enhance are:

A possible career or service opportunity that would help me grow is:

Supporting leadership growth in others is important because:

I help others nurture their inner leaders by:

"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be."

— *Rosalynn Carter*

"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."

— *Maya Angelou*

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader."

— *John Quincy Adams*

EXPLORE THE MANY PATHS TO LEADERSHIP

By Tracy Crow

Do you consider yourself a leader? People answer this question in different ways at different times, and their job title may have little bearing on how they answer it. Rather, they may consider several factors. How do they influence or assist others, formally or informally? Who comes to them with questions and requests for support? How do they innovate and ideate? What visions do they share with others? How do they nurture others to be their best? Their job responsibilities and formal or informal roles in organizations are also indicators of their leadership.

Educators lead from many positions in schools, districts, and organizations. Expectations for leadership are high from all corners. Not only do school and system leaders have critical responsibilities to address daunting challenges in their communities, but they also share those responsibilities across school buildings, asking more from every employee.

So does that make everyone in a school a leader? At times, each of us exercises leadership when we feel compelled to do so. We may see a responsibility to stand up for a particular vision for students or to speak up and advocate for ourselves and our colleagues. We've all seen examples of professionals standing up as leaders in ways that surprise us — and most likely surprising themselves.

Not everyone who leads recognizes himself or herself as a leader. The term "leader" carries different weights and expectations for each of us. Teachers may hesitate to call themselves leaders because they associate the term with those in particular roles. If they never envision themselves leaving the classroom for an administrative position, they may think they aren't cut out for leadership. Yet their colleagues and students may turn to them as leaders because of their character, vision, and influence over others. They may take on volunteer positions or committee roles that offer more formal leadership opportunities, or they may lead quietly without external recognition.

The road to leadership isn't necessarily one that educators plan carefully with a series of logical steps. Certainly some educators start as teachers and then systematically work through a traditional hierarchy on their way to the superintendency. Others, however, take a turn when an opportunity arises, or they take what might be considered a step back to explore a newfound passion, then find themselves years later an expert in their field.

In the absence of structures that help educators envision the steps they might take to keep themselves engaged and growing throughout their professional life, educators will have to create their own pathways.

Throughout this issue of *JSD*, we explore the many ways that schools and systems support and develop leaders at all levels, and we meet educators who describe how they found their way to leadership. We're highlighting diverse routes to leadership for a range of purposes.

First, if you're active in promoting and studying effective professional learning, you are most likely a leader at some level, and we hope to help you recognize that and nurture your inner leader. You may not have a title or authority that indicate a leadership position. However, those who care deeply about the kinds of learning that educators experience and who demand that such learning produce results for students hold high expectations for their profession. They also hold high expectations for themselves and their colleagues and work tirelessly to reach challenging goals. Those are key attributes of education leaders.

Second, schools, districts, and states do not consistently or systematically outline career ladders for educators. In the absence of structures that help educators envision the steps they might take to keep themselves engaged and growing throughout their professional life, educators will have to create their own pathways. We hope that this issue will spark some ideas

for educators at any age and stage in their profession.

Third, as we learn from the various programs and individuals featured in this issue, leaders in different positions require different types of learning and support depending not only on their career stage but also their individual goals, inclinations, and aspirations. As more schools and systems develop leadership programs, they will need to attend to the elements and conditions that make such learning meaningful.

Finally, we believe schools and systems have a responsibility not only to develop leadership but also to nurture it, recognize it, and celebrate it. Without leaders, the change that our students need just isn't going to happen. Whether they stand in front of kindergartners every day, lead schools with the title of principal, create compelling learning from the central office, or support educators from outside the district, education leaders demand more from themselves and others and figure out how to make results happen.

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New York City principal David Cintron summarizes observations at the end of a daylong professional learning session at P.S. 214 in the Bronx.

David Cintron offers suggestions to manage behavior.

Betty Lugo directs conversations among educators from three New York City schools as Renata Peralta, a Columbia University researcher, takes notes.

Josette Claudio is principal of P.S. 109 in the Bronx, New York.

EXPERIENCE MAKES A GREAT TEACHER

NEW YORK CITY PROGRAM CONNECTS VETERAN PRINCIPALS WITH NEW AND ASPIRING LEADERS

By Sarosh Syed

Principal Josette Claudio of P.S. 109 in the Bronx faced a problem. More than a third of her teachers had quit over one summer, possibly, according to surveys, because they were dissatisfied with the discipline in the school.

Claudio had programs in place to encourage good behavior so teachers could concentrate on classroom instruction, but some had not taken hold. For example, her "Claudio Cash" program, which rewards well-behaved students with tokens they can redeem for pencils, books, or other trinkets from a Claudio Cash store set up in the building, was faltering because several staff members didn't see it as a priority and wouldn't show up to staff the store. As a result, rewards students had been promised would languish behind locked doors, frustrating children who had spent weeks or months collecting the tokens.

Confronted with this kind of problem — or any of the other myriad difficulties that arise in the life of a leader trying to improve teaching and learning in school — many

principals would have to struggle through on their own. However, this past school year, Claudio was fortunate to have an expert to help her through: David Cintron, eight-year principal of P.S. 214. Sure enough, he had a suggestion that was as simple as it was commonsensical. Why not put the "store" on a cart and let the people who support the program take it from classroom to classroom?

That Claudio had an experienced hand she could turn to was not serendipitous. Rather, it was the result of a novel effort in New York City: the Learning Partners Program, which matches veteran principals with two or more newer ones. In 2014-15, the first full year of the effort, the city's Department of Education put 73 of the city's more than 1,800 schools into 23 groups of threes and one group

of four. Every group comprised one host school and at least two partner schools. The hosts each had muscle in one or more of 16 focus areas that the city identified as crucial to improving education; the partner schools had to be seeking to improve in those areas. In Cintron's case, the other partner school was P.S. 143 in Queens, led by Jerry Brito, who, like Claudio, was a third-year principal.

The idea originated with New York City's top education official, Carmen Fariña, who had spent a number of years as a principal. After becoming schools chancellor in 2014, Fariña said in a video for The Wallace Foundation, she drew on that early experience, specifically the recollection that "the way I learned best as a new principal was by learning from more experienced principals." The Learning Partners Program seeks to replicate that in a way that encourages uninhibited exchange among peers. "No one's rating these visits. No one's saying, 'You have to do it exactly this way,' " Fariña said. "It's about engaging people in open conversations about how to get better in leadership."

A key aspect of the effort is that a number of school staff members — not just principals, but assistant principals and teacher leaders, too — are involved. That means the program can enhance the skills of current principals while grooming the next generation as well. Through Learning Partners, participants stayed in touch throughout the year, meeting as a group for day-long sessions once a month to observe each other's work, chew over problems, and come up with solutions. Each school took turns hosting these monthly meetings so the entire group could watch its staff at work and offer suggestions for improvement.

Another key facet of the program is that the 16 focus areas cover the gamut of what good principals should master, from developing teachers, to supporting struggling students, to using resources strategically, to promoting family engagement. "All of these things relate to each other," said Marina Cofield, the Department of Education's senior executive director for leadership. "At the end of the day, all of the work supports teaching and learning."

Staffers from the partner schools benefit from watching skilled hands at work. And staffers from host schools benefit from a stipend: an extra $15,000 for the year for host principals, $10,000 for assistant principals, and $7,500 for teachers who participate. Part of the funding for the program comes from The Wallace Foundation, a national philanthropy that supports efforts to develop effective school leadership.

'THE ANSWER IS IN THE ROOM'

The city's Office of Interschool Collaborative Learning, which manages the program, sifted through about 200 applications to select the 73 schools that participated in the 2014-15 school year. Host schools needed not only success in one or more of the city's focus areas, but they also had to be led by principals with at least five years in a leadership role in New

York City and must admit at least part of their student population without regard to students' prior attendance or academic records.

New York City Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña speaks at a year-end celebration of the Learning Partners Program.

Partner schools had to have principals with between two and four years' experience running a New York City school, a high-needs student population, and well-defined focus areas in which they wanted to improve. Principals also had to demonstrate their ability to participate in the program without compromising the quality of education. Schools struggling at the most basic level, too overwhelmed to commit time to the program, are directed to other, more appropriate forms of assistance. In addition, all schools had to demonstrate support from their leadership teams and other key staffers.

Cintron's school, in the West Farms area of the Bronx, was selected as a host in part because of its success in two of the city's focus areas: building teacher and assistant principal leadership and aiding students' social and emotional development. Both Josette Claudio and Jerry Brito sought to improve in these focus areas.

Brito's interest in improving his school's leadership systems stemmed in large part from his desire to ensure the sound management of a flurry of changes, including implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the state's new teacher evaluation system. Brito runs one of the city's largest elementary schools — P.S. 143 has nearly 1,800 students and 103 teachers — and he didn't think he could navigate the changes without building support for the new policies and delegating responsibility to key staffers. "It was going to be a tsunami of changes happening at one time," he said. "There are too many moving parts. Trying to push something on my own without people believing in it just wasn't going to work."

Throughout the year, he and teams from his school met with Claudio, Cintron, and teams from their schools. His team members would talk over challenges they faced, get advice from the other schools, and observe their teams at work. After each period of observation, they had time to ask questions about how they could put some of the practices they saw in place in their school.

Challenges remain after the first year of collaboration, but Brito feels he is better equipped to deal with them. "I knew what I needed to do," he said of his mindset when he started the program. "I just didn't know how to do it."

For her part, Claudio was looking for help with students' behavior and social and emotional development, not just to

nurture well-rounded children, but also so she could keep promising teachers committed to her school. "Our kids are very rambunctious, very vocal kids," she said. "They have a voice, and they're not afraid to speak. It's how and when they do it that's really the issue."

Surveys suggested that the students' attitude was distracting Claudio's teachers and driving them from the school. Many seemed to want more support from the administration in managing student behavior. "They didn't feel like they could focus on teaching with so many discipline issues in the building," Claudio said.

Cintron's school proved a useful model for Claudio, in part because both schools have similar demographics, including that most students are of Dominican or Puerto Rican descent, one in five has a physical, emotional, or learning disability, and nine out of 10 qualify for free lunch. Claudio started putting many of the structures she saw at Cintron's school in place in her school.

She created with her staff a new vision statement for the school that emphasized qualities such as integrity, compassion, and resilience that she hopes to see reflected in her classrooms. She also started making improvements to the Claudio Cash reward system, modeling it in part on a similar "Better Bucks" system in Cintron's school.

Most important, she has begun to introduce a curriculum in place at Cintron's school that uses children's literature to help students be more empathetic and cooperative, even when they are not offered a reward. It's too early to determine whether the efforts have succeeded, but Claudio says she is seeing improvements in student behavior in the grades where the new curriculum has been rolled out.

The type of collaborative professional development that Claudio and Brito experienced is a cornerstone of the program, according to Christina Fuentes, director of the Office of Interschool Collaborative Learning. "The answer is in the room," she said, echoing the slogan for the program. "We have the internal expertise in schools to identify our problems and come up with solutions."

THE CENTRAL OFFICE MATTERS

Principals aren't on their own in the Learning Partners Program. Each group of schools in the program is assigned a facilitator to help schools implement the ideas they develop. All facilitators have extensive experience in New York City schools or have served in positions such as mentors or coaches in the central office. "They know how to make things happen for principals," said Fuentes. "They can create agendas and think through the course of study for these adult learners."

Betty Lugo, a 23-year veteran of New York City schools who serves as the facilitator for Cintron, Brito, and Claudio's triad, helped Brito and Claudio determine how they could try new initiatives with as little disruption as possible to the rest of their schools. For example, Lugo gave Claudio tips about

how she could build consensus among her staff to develop a new vision statement. She organized sessions with a consultant from the organization that developed the curriculum Claudio is introducing. And she helped design a pilot where Claudio tests the curriculum in three grades and then determines how best to use it in the rest of the school.

"When you are in a school, there are so many demands that it is difficult to set time aside for this work," Claudio said. "Betty was able to bring the members of our community together and make sure we had the right conversations."

Lugo also had to ensure that the three schools could work well together. "The job of the facilitator is to bring three schools together as a team," she said. "With that come team-building activities so three different schools that could be from three different communities can learn from each other in a safe space."

IT'S NOT JUST THE NOVICES WHO BENEFIT

Principals such as Claudio and Brito benefit from the experiences of veterans such as Cintron. But host schools seem to benefit as well. Watching Brito build his leadership teams, for example, helped Cintron identify ways in which he could strengthen his own teams and focus them on the broader goals of the school. "By teaching someone else, it reinforces and strengthens your skill set," he said. "It helped me find a crystal clear framework for the teams to ensure that the interpretation I've given doesn't become something that isn't aligned with our vision."

And the district stands to benefit as well. The Learning Partners Program's networks help identify talent and create a pool of leaders the central office can tap when looking to fill senior positions. "We look at the teachers who do this work as possible school administrators," said Fuentes. "The assistant principals involved could go on to become principals; the principals could go on to work at the central office."

LOOKING AHEAD

Based on the improvements seen in its first year, the program is expanding in 2015-16. The number of participating schools is expected to increase from 73 to 146. New host principals will each take on two partner schools, as they did in the previous year. Experienced and qualified hosts such as Cintron will become master principals, taking on as many as 10 partner schools.

The goal is to methodically connect schools to help them learn from each other and to build a self-sustaining culture that allows schools to turn to each other for support and guidance. Says Fuentes of her Office of Interschool Collaborative Learning: "Once we have a critical mass of schools that have engaged in this work, I would hope that we don't need to be in business anymore."

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Sarosh Syed (ssyed@wallacefoundation.org) is a writer for The Wallace Foundation. ■

Working Together for Student Success
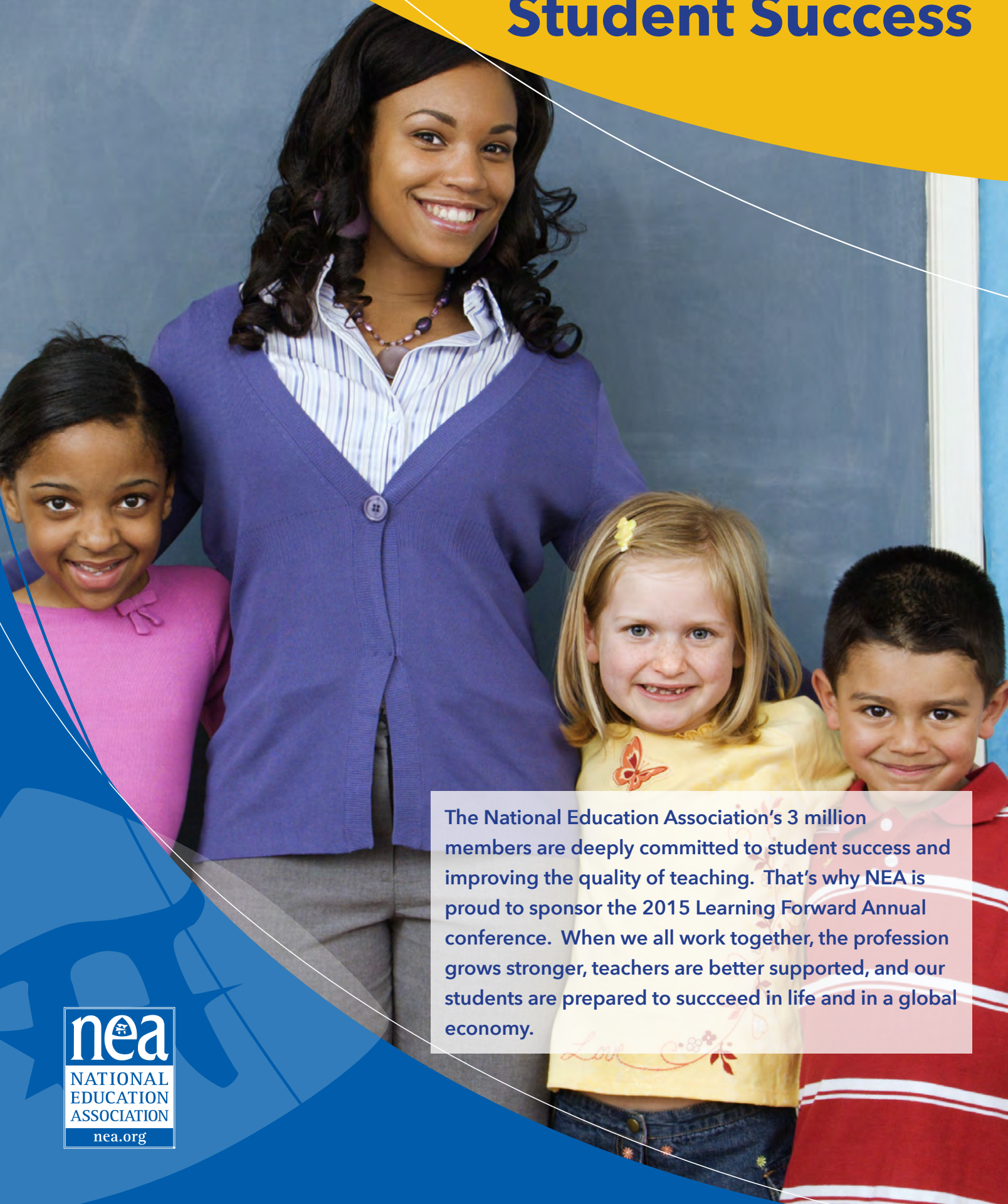
The National Education Association's 3 million members are deeply committed to student success and improving the quality of teaching. That's why NEA is proud to sponsor the 2015 Learning Forward Annual conference. When we all work together, the profession grows stronger, teachers are better supported, and our students are prepared to succceed in life and in a global economy.

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TURN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE INTO COMMON PRACTICE

SUCCESSFUL DISTRICTS CREATE SYSTEMS OF LEADERSHIP TALENT DEVELOPMENT

By Richard W. Lemons and Isobel Stevenson

Across the United States, there are schools whose students are significantly outperforming and out-improving those from nearby schools. In almost any geographic location in America, within a 30-minute drive there exist schools where classrooms are alive with stimulating learning, day in and day out.

These are places where students — and adults — are thriving, where we would be thrilled for our own children and grandchildren to attend. And not too far away from these schools are schools that are none of these things. In these schools, where the adults may be working extremely hard, change is elusive, as practices stay consistent and results are stagnant.

One key variable that explains the difference between these two sets of schools is leadership — highly competent principals and teacher leaders who galvanize a culture, align the organization, hold unyielding and high expectations for children, and develop the necessary professional capacity to serve children and communities exceptionally well.

Given what we know about the enormous importance of leaders in improving student learning, it is essential for districts to put time and effort into ensuring that they secure leaders who can do the difficult but crucial work of leading learning. In this article, we describe ways in which forward-thinking districts go about planning and implementing leadership development for educational leaders in service of improved student learning.

SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

The Connecticut Center for School Change partners with districts across the state to help produce systemic instructional improvement. In this capacity, we have a rich opportunity to observe multiple districts, learning alongside them as they plan and implement leadership development.

Over time, we have come to learn that those districts that are particularly successful in developing leadership talent are not simply creating leadership programs or formalizing new teacher leader roles. Nor are they just recruiting

more aggressively from certification programs or other districts. Effectiveness is not about any one activity or list of activities.

These districts are creating systems of leadership talent development aligned directly to the improvement efforts and culture of the district. While the details differ, we have observed five common leadership development practices across these districts, and these practices are correlated with the emergence of current and future leadership, sustainability of organizational improvement over time, and increased student performance.

These practices are not quick fixes or silver bullets. They are not programs or panaceas. They are an interrelated set of practices that promote an intentional and systemic approach to developing leaders for today and tomorrow. They are practices that create focus and coherence across the system.

1 Ground leadership development efforts in the district's theory of action for improvement.

Every district in America is implementing strategies intended to help produce educational improvement. Un-

derneath the choice of those strategies lies a logic — a theory of action — that explains the district's beliefs about why and how that strategy will lead to what desired results by when.

Thoughtful districts are not developing generic leaders. They are developing leaders who can execute and support the local theory of action. These districts have a clear and articulated vision of effective leadership, often in the form of core competencies and dispositions — we use the term "leadership framework" as a broad phrase that includes the variety of formats and vocabulary that are used to describe these competencies. The efforts of these districts to develop leadership continually reinforce the direction of the district and the vision of leadership necessary to pursue that direction.

In one of our partner districts, the superintendent and cabinet have developed a concise and cogent statement of the theory of action for district improvement. The theory of action — which focuses on improving the quality and rigor of academic tasks by providing targeted professional support — is the North Star for the district, guiding all aspects of district strategy.

Over the course of several weeks, a task force of central office administrators, principals, and teachers analyzed current research and made strategic and structured visits to investigate the leadership practices in effective schools.

The task force then created a leadership framework that describes the competencies and dispositions that building leaders need in order to effectively improve student learning within the context of the district and the district's theory of action.

District leaders now use this leadership framework to develop tools for recruiting and screening future leaders. Professional learning for building and central office administrators is designed according to the framework. The dis-

trict is implementing a new aspirant leadership program, and its curriculum aligns directly to the leadership framework.

Leadership is not a general or vague idea in the district. Instead, there is a vivid image of what effective leaders do, an image informed by research and situated in its specific context and theory of action.

2 Develop leadership to fuel sustainability over time.

Leaders of strong districts are not simply leading for today. They are thinking about how their efforts will sustain over time and ultimately lead to desired outcomes for future cohorts of students. They are working to shift best practice to common practice that can outlive superintendent transitions, endure new reform flavors of the month, and persist long enough to translate into improved student learning. Put another way, they have moved beyond succession planning to sustainability planning.

If the district is not clear on its purpose, its vision, and its theory of action, there is not a lot to sustain and, therefore, who occupies which boxes on the district's organizational chart does not matter. Indeed, one measure of a district that has set a clear direction and a strategy for meeting its goals is that the current leadership cares very much that the plans that they have worked so hard to design are implemented well, and therefore they are committed to ensuring that the people who are selected for leadership positions are capable of executing them successfully.

One of our partner districts develops leadership for sustainability by consistently reaching into the organization to engage those individuals most needed to execute a given improvement initiative. Every time a plan is being developed, the district leaders tap building administrators and teacher leaders to be part of the planning process, sharing their perspectives and developing from the beginning a shared sense of the problem the organization is trying to solve.

This district has learned that finding and deploying multiple sources of leadership in the organization has multiple positive effects. First, it shortens the window of time for implementation as more of the professionals responsible understand the rationale and the details of the initiative.

Second, it reduces the reliance upon particular leaders, as there are now more champions of the initiative distributed across the organization.

Third, it increases the leadership capacity of the district as more people — including those not currently serving in leadership positions — acquire the experiences so important for the development of expertise in any field.

3 Leverage the power of experience to drive leadership development.

Adults come to any situation with a rich store of experiences. Moreover, we know that adults (and children) learn by doing. Putting these two big ideas together, strong districts adopt strategies that support both: They help educators become researchers of their own experience, and they construct experiences that function as the raw material for leadership development. They create ways to help current and future leaders use their experience to promote skill building and problem solving.

Moreover, they purposefully design learning experiences that allow leaders to actively participate in real work, rather than assuming that the experience that happens inevitably — but somewhat randomly — with age and years of service will be enough to generate effective leaders. As a result, leadership development experiences in these districts regularly break away from one-shot workshops and move toward cycles of action, analysis, and reflection.

One of our partner districts has created an academy for aspiring leaders designed to help grow the next generation of leaders in the system. Each year, a small cohort of teacher leaders is selected for the current leadership they possess and for the potential they exhibit.

Throughout the yearlong program, academy members examine their experiences to develop competencies that the district believes are most associated with success. Every time they come together, academy members work through their own living case studies, analyzing the practical problems of practice that they experience on a day-to-day basis. These become a practical and personal source of learning material.

In addition, the academy creates new experiences for the participants, providing short-term placements to develop new skills and competencies. For example, a teacher in his fifth year of teaching was placed on a districtwide committee focused on reducing absenteeism. This teacher was learning about how to work directly with assistant principals, principals, and central office administrators as an equal member of the committee.

At the same time, he was being challenged to think beyond his classroom and his school in recommending policies, structures, and systems that could span the entire district — a perspective that benefited him, his school, and the district in designing strategy for improvement.

4 Invest in reflection to amplify learning.

Key to successfully leveraging experience is the discipline and habit of reflection. Reflection is the process of making meaning from experience. It goes beyond the surface level of what went well and what needs to be improved.

It allows leaders to generate theories about why actions lead to results, which allows them to consolidate their experience into lessons learned. Those lessons can then be used to develop theories of action for how to bring about a desired result in the future. When reflection is shared among leaders, the organization as a whole benefits — it becomes a learning organization.

Effective districts recognize and put into place deliberate structures and routines to support the consolidation of learning through reflection. Weaving reflection regularly throughout leadership development opportunities, these districts purpose-

fully model the forms of professional reflection they want for all practitioners individually and for the district collectively.

One of our partner districts has begun institutionalizing a simple form of reflection throughout all of its leadership development efforts. Future and current principals have opportunities to think about a few simple but powerful questions: What did I do? What were the results? How do I explain those results? What did I learn about the work? What did I learn about myself? What is the next level of work?

For example, at the end of principals meetings, administrators get out their journals or tablets, theorize about their recent leadership experiences in writing, and then share with a colleague. Within an aspirant principal program the district has initiated, participants produce a final portfolio where they document not just what they have accomplished, but the evolution of their thinking.

These protocols are asking individual leaders to live the same cycle of continuous improvement that they are expected to create and sustain in the organizations they lead. The process of harnessing inquiry and reflection during individual and organizational learning thus becomes institutionalized at the same time as leadership is developed and nurtured.

5 Ensure the quality of leadership development activities.

Effective districts do not merely design and implement leadership development strategies. They invest considerable energy and time in understanding how the strategies are being implemented, the overall quality of the work, and whether leaders are ultimately enacting the dispositions and competencies desired.

These districts deliberately engage leaders in conversations about what quality looks like, thereby reclarifying or even raising the expectations around effective leadership and effective leadership development.

Some of these practices are about organizational coherence, aligning the leadership framework to the other strategies, systems, and structures of the district. Others are about leadership growth based on what we know about how adults learn best. Together, they represent an interrelated collection of intentional practices focused on developing leaders who can deliver on bold improvement agendas, now and into the future.

Districts committed to these practices will also work to ensure they are practiced. It is not enough to design systems, structures, and routines. Districts have to hold the organization and leaders within the organization accountable for executing them at the highest quality.

One of our partner districts has developed systems of quality control and coherence by articulating a set of standards for what constitutes effective leadership development and professional learning. Facilitators from across the district are asked to reflect on each session, asking themselves the degree to which they were successful in designing and implementing an experience that aligned with the district's leadership development standards.

They use a program evaluation instrument that asks participants to assess the experience relative to those standards. The district does not take for granted that the leaders involved in high-quality professional learning for themselves will automatically plan and implement similarly high-quality professional learning for the educators with whom they work.

Modeling without explicit guidance as to what is being modeled and why is limited in its power, and so expectations are set for how professional learning will be implemented throughout the district. Central office staff observe and monitor professional learning at every level, providing feedback and helping leaders engage in continuous improvement cycles.

ALIGNED LEARNING CREATES SUSTAINABILITY

Leadership matters. This reality defines a district challenge: how to guarantee that every school has access to effective leadership, today and tomorrow. Exceptional leaders shift cultures, raise expectations, and improve performance. Ensuring that exceptional leaders exist in every school and district demands more much more than simply creating a leadership academy, recruiting more aggressively, or retooling professional development offerings.

Districts that are serious about developing leaders who can bring about change that leads to improved student learning will align professional support systems to how adults learn best, leveraging the energy of experience and power of reflection to help current and future leaders develop. Moreover, they will not leave these efforts to chance, regularly monitoring and constantly improving leadership development efforts.

We cannot emphasize enough that adopting the plans cited here without an overall strategy is an easy route to frustration. Making certain that improved leadership leads to improved student learning requires articulating a clear, logical sequence: building a leadership framework that leads to improved professional learning, which leads in turn to more effective school and district leadership and resulting changes in organization and instruction that will lead to improved outcomes for students.

Districts committed to systemic improvement will anchor all their efforts to develop leaders within their theory of action for improvement. Developing this strategy requires deep thinking, authentic commitment to continuous improvement, and the will to embark on, and sustain, a long-term systemic improvement plan.

But it is worth it. Such a strategy will develop sources of leadership that can help improvement efforts endure over time, enabling effective practice to turn into common practice.

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NAVIGATION AIDS

9 SHIFTS IN PRACTICE SMOOTH THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO CENTRAL OFFICE

JOE SULLIVAN is a high school principal in a rural district. He and the other principals in the district received an email announcing the assistant superintendent's retirement. One of the principals forwarded the email to him with a note saying, "Here you go, man. This is your opportunity."

"Why would I want to do that?" Sullivan wondered. "I really don't want to be one of *those* administrators, do I? Is this really a path to something worthwhile and fulfilling?"

By Thomas M. Van Soelen and Debra Harden

No longer is the central office a place for educators' careers to meet a dead end. Nor can it be where ineffective leaders are transferred to lessen impact. It cannot be "the blob," as coined by William Bennett (Walker, 1987). The Wallace Foundation notes that the central office has never been more important for system and individual school improvement (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010).

Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) articulated 21 responsibilities of school-level leadership, then turned their attention to the superintendency. This meta-analysis (Waters & Marzano, 2006) resulted in four major findings:

1. District-level leadership matters.
2. Effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts.
3. Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement.
4. Effective superintendents may provide principals with "defined autonomy" — that is, setting nonnegotiable goals for learning and instruction yet allowing schools to decide how to reach those goals.

This research has informed superintendent preparation programs and evaluation processes for almost a decade. According to the Education Commission of the States, 45 states have superintendent preparation programs offered by universities, associations, or a combination of the two (Education Commission of the States, 2015). The pathway to the superintendency is commonplace.

Although other district office leaders (e.g. assistant superintendents and directors) are mentioned several times in the meta-analysis, attention to their effectiveness is often uneven and not aligned with research. Some states offer districts choices in how to evaluate leaders who are not at the building level. This often results in a hodgepodge of practices, marginalizing the possible impact of a district office leader.

As the high school principal at the beginning of this article implied, biases exist against the quality level of district office leaders. Sometimes these assumptions are well-deserved.

In 2008, the Georgia State Superintendents Association decided to take on the issue of district office leader quality. Having successfully implemented the Superintendent Professional Development Program for 18 years already, the association had both the credibility and experience to organize the effort. In fact, the association's own data argued for the program's need.

Not all graduates of the Superintendent Professional Development Program moved on to become superintendents. Program graduates said that the job was far more complex than they anticipated, and their skill sets were better matched for other work.

Debra Harden, a former Georgia superintendent and professional development director for the superintendents association, rallied a diverse statewide group to design professional learning that would result in high-quality central office leaders. The group used several sources to guide their work:

- Superintendent success criteria (Waters & Marzano, 2006);
- Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement Leader Qualities (Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement, 2012); and
- ISLLC Standards (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008).

Although each of these published standards were critical in program development, Harden's own collected data became foundational. Harden interviewed 12 superintendents who had successfully transitioned from school to district office.

As she analyzed the qualitative data, important shifts began to emerge. Just as teachers are shifting practices for

the Common Core State Standards, school and program leaders need to do the same to navigate their way successfully to the central office.

In this article, we outline the shifts in practice that need to take place to make a successful transition, using vignettes that describe real experiences by Georgia educators. Some of these stories demonstrate a successful transition; others highlight an ongoing challenge.

SHIFTING PRACTICES

The district office leader's role is to support and implement the work of the superintendent. These nine shifts create the conditions to make that happen.

1 From vertical to horizontal.

District office functions (human resources, finance, transportation, curriculum and instruction, etc.) operate across the system on a horizontal plane. Schools and other operational departments are responsible for applying many system functions within the building or department. The school leader takes a vertical approach to managing those system functions.

After 12 years as a building leader, Veronica Lewis became assistant superintendent for human resources in her district. As a building leader, she adeptly recruited and retained teachers. Once in the district office, she discovered that not all schools receive the same updates regarding new teaching applicants. She immediately saw that she must put processes in place to ensure that all schools, not just her former school, are treated fairly and equitably.

2 From micro (system) to macro (systemic).

The school or program leader operates in a microcosm within the district — a system within a system. The operation and implementation of district initiatives focus chiefly on activities and processes that implement school and district goals. A district office leader operates in a macro system made up of all schools and functions of the district. The operation and implementation of district initiatives focus on systemic implications for the district as a whole.

Suzanne Wheeler was a highly respected building leader. Her school was organized, activities were well-planned, and the adults and students were clear regarding expectations. Wheeler had a well-designed system for her school. These skills served her well in her new role. She became a strong district leader, creating processes that are workable in a variety of school settings.

3 From affiliation to separation.

The school leader is affiliated with the school and the internal and external communities he or she serves. This affiliation comes from daily interactions and relationships with those communities within the school. The district leader, while affiliated with the system, rarely interacts with the same group of students, faculty, or parents and is more likely to interact with community leaders on

> **As a building leader, Martha Spearman knew which department had what and how much of each. As the district's technology director, she was perplexed when she had 25 extra computers to give out.**

systemwide issues. The result for district leaders is a sense of separation from the real work of schools.

As a principal, Victor Nesbitt loved committee work. He thought he did the work well, resulting in positive outcomes for students. When he began his new committee assignment, setting enrollment zones, he missed working with people from his school. Now that he works with community members and parents, his positional authority means little. After several months of work that felt slow, Nesbitt finally recognized that he is the right man for the job. Some tasks require more separation from individual buildings.

4 From "for superintendent" to "with superintendent."

As a school leader, the relationship with the superintendent is described as a line position. While reporting to the superintendent, the district office leader also collaborates with, provides critical analysis for, and serves as a resource to the superintendent.

School leaders are accustomed to a formal or line relationship with the superintendent. Maggie Curtis learned quickly that her superintendent appreciated her subject-matter expertise, but he also expects her, as chief of staff, to consistently, and often without his asking, scrutinize prospective initiatives, point out potential pitfalls, and identify inconsistencies with the mission. These were new skills for her. As a principal, she had expressed her viewpoint, albeit carefully. As a member of the superintendent's staff, her unfiltered candor is essential as he seeks to be fully informed.

5 From receiving service to providing service.

School leaders provide service and leadership for their schools. District office leaders provide service and leadership for all schools. School leaders may not be aware of the concerns or needs of other school leaders. The district office leader is responsible for being acutely aware of all, and sometimes competing, school needs.

Martha Spearman knew how to divvy out resources. As a building leader, she knew which department had what and how much of each. As the district's technology director, she was perplexed when she had 25 extra computers to give out. Her former methodology would result in a small school getting more modern computers, but the largest school would have more students without access to computers that could do what students need.

She ended up using a different data point: the ratio of students to modern computers. Using that data, she asked the three campuses with the highest ratios to write a plan showing

how they would use the 25 computers. After a committee read the proposals, none of the plans rose to the top. Spearman then offered the same process to the next two schools. After reading those two plans, she awarded the 25 computers to the school with the best proposal.

6 From implement to design.

School and program leaders implement district initiatives designed in collaboration with district office leaders. Frequently, the final design must accommodate the needs of all schools and programs, which may vary. As a result, school leaders can customize district programs for their schools within parameters agreed on throughout the district. The district office leader monitors the implementation to ensure congruence with district goals.

As he transitioned to the technology office, Addison Mc-Murtry was most excited about a districtwide launch of an initiative. He worked closely with the focus building, developing a very tight plan with clear outcomes. Victoria Bernhardt's multiple measures of data model formed the basis of the evaluation plan, and as he presented it to the board of education, he became more and more excited about the project.

When it came time to collect some of the school process data, the building principal was surprised to see McMurtry. "Why are you here doing observations?" the principal asked. He viewed it as his job. McMurtry was confused. The written plan — which every member had signed off on — listed him as the observer. As McMurtry reflected on the situation, he realized the onus of the developed plan was on him, not the school. He was still living more on the implementation side of this continuum, not the design.

7 From product (your work) to process (their work).

School leaders are responsible for overseeing programs that promote student achievement. Accountability for student work rests with school leaders. District office leaders are responsible for the processes and resources that support those school programs, which are allocated districtwide to achieve district goals.

As a high school principal, Arthur Bolling knew how to set student achievement targets for his evaluation and school improvement plan. As the secondary schools director, he is having more difficulty setting what his superintendent calls "process targets." Bolling is a bottom-line guy and would rather use student test scores to measure his effectiveness, but he understands that he is now another step removed from the classroom. He is looking at his department work plan for the year and will use some of those deliverables (e.g. revised course curriculum calendars) as process goals.

8 From facilitating to networking.

School leaders facilitate the work of their students, faculty, staff, and community. They are responsible for facilitating interactions between and among all constituents and district office leaders. District office leaders network with school and other system leaders, the community at large, and state and federal agencies in order to develop alliances for conducting and completing the district's work.

Frannie Johannsen is an introvert, plain and simple. As a building principal, it was easy to overcome this for pep rallies and honor assembles. Even curriculum nights were manageable. As the federal program director, she is having difficulty with the required grant meetings. The constant networking just to understand the program requirements drains her. She needs these relationships and networks in order for schools to meet their goals. As a school leader, she could often work with just one contact. As a district leader, she needs to amass a web of contacts and possibilities.
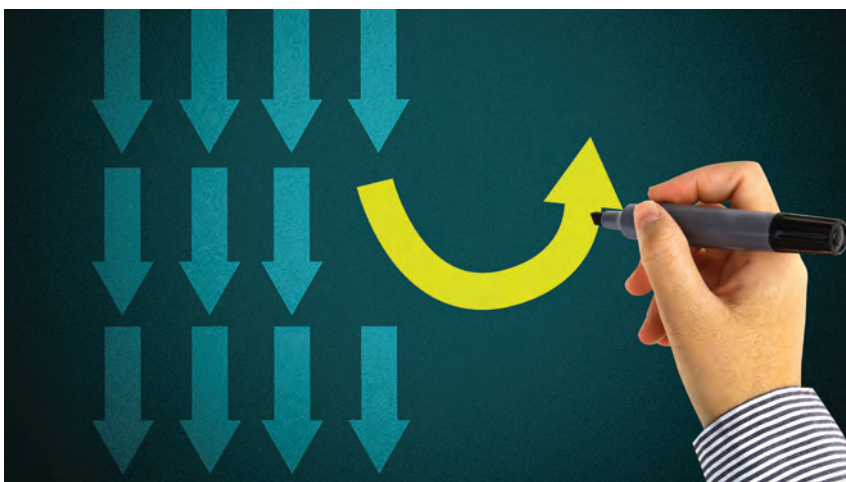
9 From center stage to backstage.

School leaders are identified with the school. Frequently, they are center stage. When a school name is mentioned, the building leader is closely identified with the school, its activities, and its standing in the community. The district office leader operates backstage and supports the work of the school leader.

Nancy Grimes was the principal of the same building for 27 years. When the superintendent asked her to consider central office work, she initially resisted but eventually believed it might be an appropriate transition. After several months, she realized how lonely central office work could be. She missed the schools, the staff, the students, and, sometimes, even the parents. It took almost a year in her new position for her to realize that school successes were also hers. She played a part — just not one where name appeared in the credits.

WHY TEACHERS MAKE GOOD LEARNING LEADERS

By Brian Edwards and Jesse Hinueber

"Somebody asked me recently what pushes me as a professional," says Becky Jensen, an elementary school teacher in San Jose, California. "It started when a new principal came in several years ago and let me try new strategies. But he also set up a structure to help me think through what worked and what didn't, and then he gave me the space to lead."

A principal's support helped Jensen become more reflective and intentional about her teaching, which in turn led her to want to help other teachers. She began by co-facilitating her grade-level team despite being among the least experienced staff members at her school. In that role, she emphasized depth over breadth: "Rather than coming up with a whole list of strategies for teachers to try, I engaged my colleagues in the specifics of one strategy. We planned lessons, gathered materials, and modeled instruction for one another so that we had everything we needed to implement the strategy the next day."

Jensen exemplifies the fact that teachers at all career stages, if given the proper support, can design and lead effective professional learning. When teachers who deeply understand the needs of their students and colleagues lead

EDUCATORS INTERVIEWED FOR THIS ARTICLE

Sarah Bitner
Grade-level facilitator and instructional council member
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Peggy Candelaria
Principal
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Becky Jensen
Grade-level facilitator and instructional leadership team member
San Jose, California

Katie Smith
Literacy coach and instructional leadership team facilitator
Chicago, Illinois

Lindsey Walden
Grade-level facilitator and instructional leadership team member
Battle Creek, Michigan

When teachers who deeply understand the needs of their students and colleagues lead professional learning in their schools, everyone benefits.

professional learning in their schools, everyone benefits. Teacher leaders get to engage with their work in new ways. Their colleagues receive relevant, actionable professional learning. Principals leverage the benefits of teacher collaboration in leading instruction at their schools. District officials see the pipeline of school and district leaders expand.

Ultimately, and most importantly, students benefit. For example, students at Jensen's school achieved great gains on the California Standards Tests as the school developed its professional learning systems between 2010 and 2013. In English language arts, the percentage of students achieving proficiency grew from 32% to 53%, and in math, the percentage increased from 50% to 72%.

Jensen is one of five educators whose perspectives on teacher leadership are featured here. These educators have all taught low-income urban children in elementary grades for several years, but in different parts of the United States. They hold similar views on how schools can foster the development of teacher leaders, some key ways that teachers can lead professional learning for their colleagues, and the benefits and challenges of teacher leadership. The discussion of these topics below is informed greatly by their voices.

FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT

The educators we spoke with represent a range of personalities — from relatively shy to naturally outspoken, and in between. However, they have in common a desire to share their expertise with their colleagues and make an impact beyond the classroom. They also agree on the conditions that help teachers emerge as leaders in their schools:

Shared vision: School staff must share a vision of the type of school they are trying to create so that instructional leaders are taking staff and students in the same general direction. "You have to be on the same page and want the same thing," says Peggy Candelaria, a principal in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "You always want to come back to your vision as a school and a community so that you know why you're doing what you're doing."

Culture of trust: Maintaining a culture of mutual respect and trust is vital. Teachers need to be able to trust that their leaders will represent their interests; school administrators must have confidence that teacher leaders will implement initiatives with fidelity; and teacher leaders need to trust that the administration will support them, even when they encounter initial resistance. Katie Smith, a literacy coach at a pre-K-2 school in Chicago, Illinois, puts it this way: "If teacher leaders are not feeling trusted or are always doing the heavy lifting in the face of pushback, they're not going to want to be leaders anymore because they'll be frustrated."

Opportunities to lead professional learning: For teachers to become leaders of professional learning, a school must set aside time for such learning. Protecting time for teachers to hone their craft as they try to improve the school's instructional program signals that the school values professional learning and that there will be a sub-

stantial chance of making progress for students. Without such protected time, teachers will have few opportunities to practice being leaders.

Sometimes, aspiring teacher leaders create their own opportunities to practice. For example, Smith volunteered to help facilitate her school's instructional leadership team while she was a kindergarten and special education teacher. The literacy coach who facilitated the team took Smith under her wing, walked through the steps of facilitating the group, and asked Smith to help plan and run meetings. Smith's initiative led to her being encouraged to apply for the coaching role when the previous coach retired.

Encouragement to lead: Other teachers need substantial encouragement to assume a leadership role. The three teachers interviewed for this article did not enter the education profession with the intention of becoming school leaders. For example, Lindsey Walden, who teaches in Battle Creek, Michigan, became a grade-level coordinator and instructional leadership team member after eight years of focusing on her own classroom instruction.

Two years ago, her professional growth plan included the concept of becoming more of a leader at her school. Encouragement from coaches and administrators gave her the push she needed. "I was more the type of teacher who sat back and listened and took everything in," says Walden. "I didn't realize that I had the potential to become a leader until I really worked with my principal and gained a little more confidence."

Support and training: Aspiring teacher leaders also need support and training. For example, they often need training in how to facilitate groups, which entails planning meetings, asking questions that will elicit participation, documenting decisions, and forming action plans.

Another area where coaching can be helpful is in having difficult conversations with peers. Teacher leaders may need to explain unpopular administrative decisions to their colleagues or give constructive feedback on another teacher's instruction. It is an area with which some teacher leaders struggle. For example, Walden noted, "I recently told my instructional coach that I'm interested in expanding my leadership role, but my biggest weakness is having difficult conversations because I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings." The coach's response was just what Walden needed: an offer to role-play and think through a variety of potentially tense discussions.

With these conditions in place, teachers at various stages of their career can step up as leaders. Smith has found this to be true at her school in Chicago. She works with veteran teachers who enjoy teaming up with their colleagues, providing mentorship, and lending their expertise for the benefit of the entire school. "We have teachers who've been teaching for 15 to 20 years who are phenomenal teacher leaders because they see the benefits of analyzing data and always trying to improve," says Smith.

Newer teachers also make strong instructional leaders, she

says, because working closely with other staff members comes naturally to them, reflecting the current professional emphasis on collaboration. However, they may need to work especially hard to establish their credibility with their more seasoned counterparts. Smith would tell a new educator who wants to become a leader, "You need at least two or three years to hone your practice as a teacher, try different strategies, achieve success in different areas, and have a body of work to reflect upon. You'll use all of that to lead other teachers and communicate with them in meaningful ways."

TEACHER LEADERSHIP ROLES

Two common roles that teachers engage in to develop as school leaders are facilitating professional learning communities and participating in instructional leadership teams.

Facilitating professional learning communities

Professional learning communities in the form of grade-level teams or subject-matter departments allow educators to work together in a wide variety of ways — for example, peer coaching, constructing and scoring assessments, lesson planning, data analysis, and lesson study.

To be as effective as possible, a professional learning community should embody Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, which include several criteria. It should be committed to high expectations, continuous improvement, and collective responsibility. In addition, a professional learning community needs to incorporate several design elements (e.g. active engagement, modeling, reflection, feedback, and ongoing support) and use the element that is most appropriate to the goals and learning styles of the participants and the topic under discussion.

Professional learning community members should analyze student outcome data to monitor instruction and the learning community itself. In addition, the group's goals should align with those of the school and district. Finally, members must make efficient use of the human, fiscal, and technological resources needed for professional learning.

For those expectations to be met, a professional learning community must have effective facilitation. A strong facilitator generally sets the agenda for meetings, keeps sessions moving and on point, and ensures that all voices are heard. Smith, the literacy coach in Chicago, sees grade-level facilitation as a good entry point for teachers looking to have an impact beyond their own classroom: "It's a nonintimidating way to move into a teacher leadership role. Teachers are with their peers, and their peers know them and respect them, and the teachers identify with each other and each other's challenges."

Facilitators gain experience in team building and navigating adult dynamics while keeping their lesson planning and data analysis skills sharp. Walden in Battle Creek believes that facilitating her grade-level team has improved her own teaching:

"It's pushed me to learn about best practices and share what I've learned with my colleagues, which has allowed me to take a look at myself as a teacher, to become a better teacher."

According to Walden, the school also benefits when professional learning is facilitated by one of its teachers rather than someone from outside the school: "If your colleagues see you delivering the information and know that you're implementing it in the classroom next door, they're more apt to be on board than if the information comes top-down."

In sum, when a teacher facilitates a professional learning community, the facilitator acquires or sharpens valuable skills and fellow teachers tend to engage more than they would if someone else led the work. Participating teachers also gain support and mutual accountability.

Participating in an instructional leadership team

Joining a school's instructional leadership team is another pathway to teacher leadership. An instructional leadership team generally consists of the principal, instructional coaches, and teachers from each grade or grade span. Often, the grade-level representatives on the instructional leadership team are the facilitators of grade-level teams.

The instructional leadership team works on schoolwide issues such as developing or sustaining a schoolwide vision, setting goals, and planning strategies for reaching those goals. In addition, instructional leadership teams often assist the principal with operational issues — for example, revising the process for evaluating students for special education or ensuring that each classroom constitutes a cross-section of the school's students.

When teachers join an instructional leadership team, they gain opportunities to make an impact beyond their own classroom and influence the policies and strategies of the whole school. In addition, if a teacher is considering pursuing a coaching role or principalship, taking part in an instructional leadership team will give the teacher a small sense of the responsibilities of those positions. Smith's instructional leadership team in Chicago works explicitly on general leadership skills, discussing what it means to be a leader and reflecting each week on challenges and successes they experienced as a leader.

The rest of the school also benefits from having an instructional leadership team with robust participation by teachers. The principal gains thought partners on challenging issues, and some of the principal's heavy workload can be delegated to instructional leadership team members. In addition, teachers not on the instructional leadership team gain representation in school-level decisions, and instructional leadership team members can act as mediators if difficult issues arise between administrators and staff.

Sarah Bitner, a 2nd-grade teacher on the instructional council of Candelaria's school in Albuquerque, describes the situation at her school this way: "My colleagues know that when we have something to take to the principal, it makes sense for me

to be that person because I have a good relationship with her and know how to talk to her."

When a team of administrators and teachers work in unison to realize a vision, students win. For example, in Smith's school in Chicago, reading scores increased markedly as a high-functioning instructional leadership team led the implementation of Common Core standards and created units of study in literacy. In 2011-12, before the instructional leadership team hit its stride, 27% of 2nd graders were reading on grade level. Just two years later, 42% were.

However, participating in an instructional leadership team comes with challenges. For example, the work of the instructional leadership team will not always be appreciated by non-members. Smith, the literacy coach in Chicago, believes that part of her role as the facilitator of her school's instructional leadership team is to make sure that the team members know how important their work is. She offers, "They might not hear it from anyone else, and they need to hear it from someone."

A related challenge for instructional leadership team members in some schools is finding successors. Ideally, new members would join from time to time as long-serving members rotated out so that a broad cross-section of staff gets to play a part in leading the school, and a few teachers do not feel that the long-term success of the school depends solely on them.

Instructional leadership activities often occur outside the regular school day so teacher leaders must adopt a flexible schedule, using time typically spent preparing for their own classes to support the learning of their peers. In addition, they may receive minimal or no compensation for the extra work. Bitner in New Mexico puts it succinctly: "You have to really want to be a leader. There's no pay for it." However, the fact that Bitner has volunteered repeatedly for the extra responsibilities indicates that the professional growth and fulfillment that come with being a teacher leader make the sacrifices worthwhile for her.

NEXT ROLES

The teacher leaders discussed here see themselves and their career possibilities differently now that they have grown into new roles. They find leading professional learning very rewarding and, though they would miss working directly with students, are considering becoming full-time instructional coaches.

Interestingly, these teachers recognize that becoming a principal involves a different mindset and set of skills, and they expressed little interest in going down that path. For now, they are enjoying being able to use their energy and knowledge to raise the achievement of not only their own classrooms, but those of other teachers as well.

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THE DRIVE TO STRIVE

**AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL REFLECTS
ON A CAREER BUILT ON CONSTANT LEARNING**

By Tameka Osabutey-Aguedje

At different stages of my career, I have experienced, supported, and facilitated professional learning efforts. As an assistant principal, I find that I have learned something of value at each stage. Professional learning that effectively challenges educators at every level resembles the mystique of a firefly (Bibbo & d'Erizans, 2014). And like the blinking of a firefly's light, effective educators attract and inspire others to support professional goals and create a climate that bolsters student achievement and community success.

Just as instructional rounds are important to medical training, instructional rounds in schools are important as well, helping teachers address distractions, routines, and incidents that prevent effective instruction. Moreover, instructional rounds allow teachers to try best practices that increase student engagement. As teachers, leaders, and support staff work together to perform this type of school-based inquiry, followed up with clearly communicated feedback, schools can set specific goals that help staff members improve their own practice by implementing professional learning.

Professional learning jump-started the early years of my career. In 1999, urban schools were a hotbed of research funding for technology integration and the development of professional learning communities. Although I didn't aspire to leadership, the skills I developed made me a teacher leader on a mission.

Shortly after relocating to the Atlanta, Georgia, area to teach at a new middle school, I found myself in a cadre of robust, knowledgeable new teachers with a passion for at-risk students. We relied heavily on the best practices present in the literature on social policy and the needs of the middle school child. We created a professional learning culture that examined student work and dug into the data of the students we served. We contributed time and supported each other's professional growth. These experiences turned out to be assets we took to our respective schools throughout our successive roles.

A FULL PLATE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

An educator's typical day is composed of a series of 15-minute problem-solving segments interspersed with interruptions of tragedy, hilarity, anger, and noise.

As an assistant principal, I aspire to set the school's vision, increase parental engagement, know the names of all the students, know the birthdays of all the children of faculty members, know the number of students on free and reduced lunch (by gender and ethnicity), develop strategies for increasing test performance, and protect the constitutional rights of every student.

Add to this my participation in teacher observations, with preconferences and post-conferences, and the hours required to type up the observation. The paperwork associated with the evaluation routines for a large faculty is astonishing. And principals are expected to be at every athletic event or club meeting and participate in the civic life of a community after the school day is over.

To these expectations, add the paperwork required by the central office as well as staying up-to-date on the latest instructional materials, teaching methodology, and discipline strategies.

With the increasing emphasis on responding to email and returning telephone messages promptly, a 21st-century principal's skills also include measuring the response time from when a parent makes a request and that request is answered (Zepeda, 2014).

My responsibilities measure up to those of teachers, students, and parents working to develop a collaborative vision that encompasses and addresses the responsibilities of our roles. I am confident that my experience will help me create a climate of learning at my next school.

— Tameka Osabutey-Aguedje

We tried to mirror the research on how to bring one's school environment to life (Reeves, 2006). Working together on a few shared goals that were important to us, we were able to focus on school improvement

before any of us really understood what that structured process was.

FIGHT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Educators quickly realize that professional learning consumes a large portion of their time because of the array of state requirements, district rollouts, and schoolwide initiatives that are part of their duties. The decision to maximize expectations and fight for student success is dependent on charting a path through these duties, requests, and obligations, which seem to affect operation of the school each day.

Professional development at various stages should address difficulties students, teachers, and principals face — issues such as student relationships, grant writing, or home-to-school triage, which are difficult to simulate in meaningful ways (Dunaway, Bird, Flowers, & Lyons, 2010).

Using professional learning, online resources, and mentors to examine my daily practice drove my improvement. I realized that it was important to learn and grow rather than just try to survive on the job. Learning as a way to improve professional practice became the message that I shared with team members, new mentees, or any panel that I joined.

Taking a broader learning approach to professional improvement helped with long-range planning and conveyed to others that I was willing to listen and support ways that could improve our school. By providing constructive feedback, such as encouraging the development of a personal growth plan as well as stressing the importance of identifying personal resources, the teachers with whom I interacted were able to develop as instructional leaders.

Now when I encounter those 7th-grade teachers who started their careers at the turn of the century, we reflect on the all the solutions we had employed for various problems.

PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE PRACTICE

When I started as a teacher, I was exposed to innovative practices during my university practicum in Detroit (Michigan) Public Schools. I wanted to help my toughest students become passionate about science. I appreciated receiving advice from veteran teachers, but most of them were cautionary instead of reflective.

I know those old-school educators were trying to be supportive, and I respected how they provided a listening ear and became the devil's advocate for all the "new" innovative practices that I had suggested. Fortunately, I also encountered professionals who helped me grow instructionally by sharing their best practices.

I reflected on their insights and began to perform the same checks for understanding and responsibility with other teachers and school leaders. I began to look for good teaching practices and left the "but ifs" at home. The decision to stop growing or avoid connections that improve professional practice is not an option that leads to success (Starkman, Scales, & Roberts, 1999).

Educators can't help others grow by working in isolation. I joined professional organizations, participated in a math and science partnership grant, and followed professional learning networks on social media to learn strategies and share practices that might aid our school processes.

These activities I now recognize as embedded professional learning. The educators I partnered with believed that instructional leadership skills, the development of a long-term institutional perspective, and the encouragement of networking skills would aid our confidence and ability (Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2015).

SUPPORT FOR NOVICE TEACHERS

As a teacher leader, I was expected to convince co-educators with little desire to solve school problems that they should do so — and without additional pay (Whitaker, 2003). Developing the skills to build consensus, create meaningful adult learning opportunities, and remove obstacles to quality instruction were complex journeys that spanned multiple positions.

Teacher support specialist training gave me a framework for presenting meaningful coaching techniques as a means to support personalized learning. This not only contributed to personal growth but also moved the school district toward its goals (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015).

Gordon, Jacobs, and Solis (2014) describe time and work management as an important aspects of professional learning for all teacher leaders. These known work virtues include skills for organizing people, resources, programs, and activities. They form a discipline that, if not mastered, will throw a monkey wrench into the lives of educational leaders as they ascend.

Those who go from good to great can have a more positive impact on any organization because they have the ability to introduce professional learning skills to new teachers within the context of a meaningful relationship. In addition, leadership team members must learn how to mentor ineffective teachers, which requires a different approach than novice mentorship (Springfield Public Schools, 2014).

As an aspiring school leader, I took great pride in being included in the orientation of new teachers to the school and community. Preparing novice teachers for the first weeks of teaching, understanding the problems experienced by teachers, and presenting problem-solving scenarios for the school day was a professional challenge.

Taking each day as a fresh start, meeting each person where they were instructionally, and steering toward a balanced relationship helped prevent negative criticisms (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004). My growth goals centered on providing tools that would further a teacher's progress to prepare for interactions with students in the classroom, with colleagues, and with parents.

The personalization that surfaces in schools comes from

teacher leaders and principals setting an example through their daily practice. Helping new teachers build relationships with experienced colleagues is another avenue for developing multiple modes of communication, which keeps the professional vision for the school alive.

PULLING THE PIECES TOGETHER

As a female assistant principal, I strive to be resourceful and agile in order to help teachers focus on the total child. Many of the skills that are pivotal to all leadership roles are sometimes perceived as divisive.

Melissa Nixon, a former school principal, writes: "Many times when participating in meetings with teachers and staff about data, lesson planning, and best practices, teachers would often say they were frustrated with my being involved with 'everything.' I was being perceived as a micromanager — a common stereotype about women principals. I countered this stereotype by explaining that, as a principal, I was also the instructional leader of the school who guides the staff team towards the common goal of improving student achievement. Parents and staff then began to see me as an inclusive team member, rather than an intrusive outsider" (Nixon, 2013).

Making the transition from professional learning coach to teacher leader and other roles presented new challenges for me, but when I became an assistant principal, I encountered barriers that made professional coaching more difficult. This was another chance for me to grow and develop as a leader.

The act of communicating clear expectations becomes challenging when staff members have experienced abusive leaders or relied on administrators not having the time to follow through. In those situations, I've found that building relationships around finding solutions to classroom concerns that improve teachers' workloads creates the trust that I'm in it for the long haul.

I invited the faculty to learning opportunities or small-group sessions where we would go over particular strategies for that department (Gupton, 2010). By doing so, we transformed staff culture a few fireflies at time.

Discussing problem-based learning scenarios with specific students or parents during collaborative planning forms the primary pedagogy for aspiring instructional leaders. The goal is to create mini action research projects around known situations, building the motivation needed to surmount problems. This is a must for teacher teams (Brazer & Bauer, 2013).

The roles, skills, and attitudes that I developed while supporting and working with others throughout my career played a part in my effectiveness as an instructional leader on multiple initiatives (Short & Jones, 1991). My principal supported my professional growth through opportunities to gain realistic knowledge of practices normally performed by school principals (Dunaway et al., 2010).

Success will depend on my ability to listen to the teachers, students, and parents who know the ropes and have concerns.

Together we will develop a collaborative vision.

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IT'S NOT JUST *WHAT* YOU SAY

VERBAL AND NONVERBAL SKILLS HELP LEADERS ADDRESS CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVE OUTCOMES
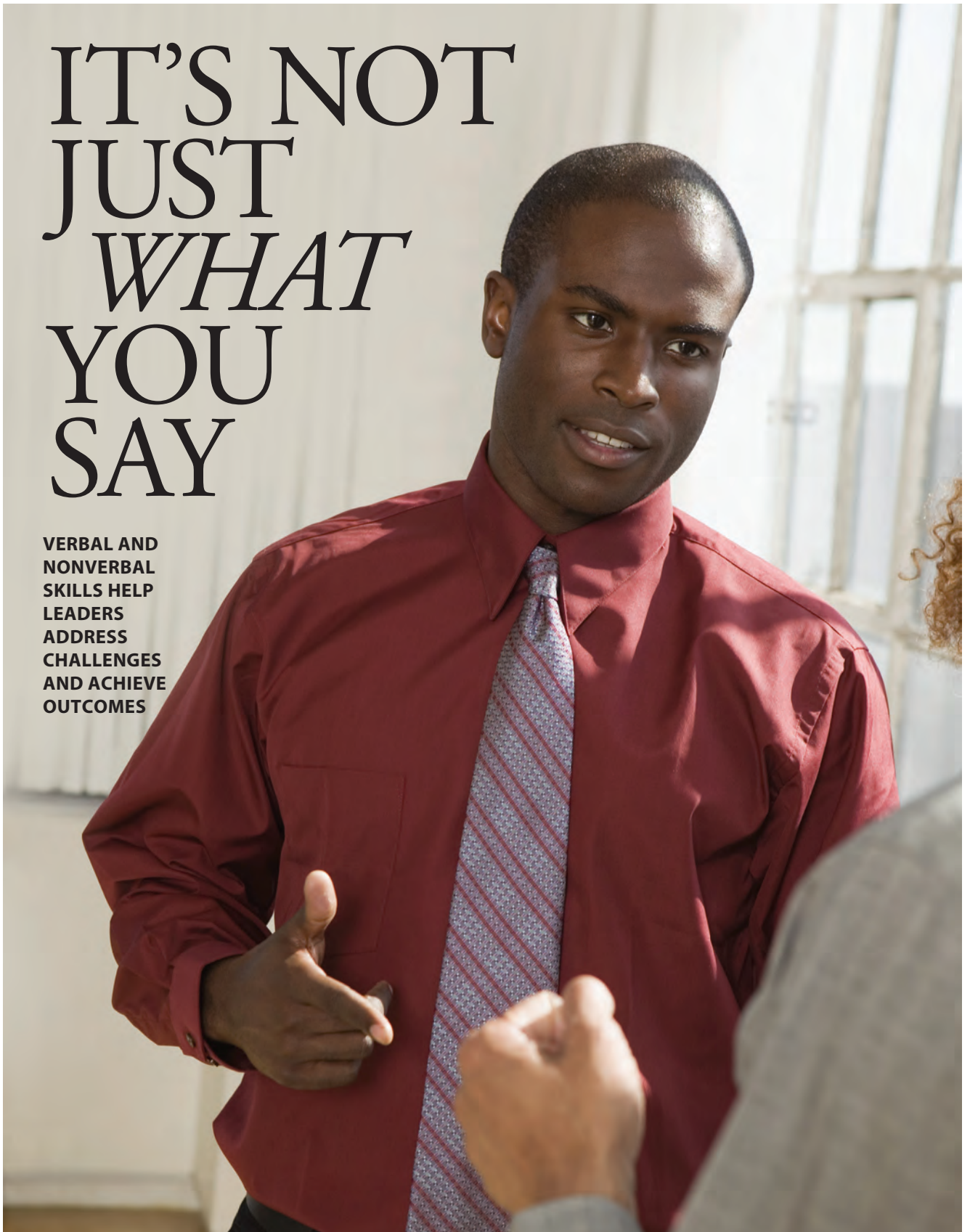
By Kendall Zoller, Antonia Issa Lahera, and Anthony H. Normore

This is a story about two school leaders in a large Southern California urban district who used skills developed in a university school leadership program to create rapport, empathy, and trust while leading through challenging situations and achieving actionable outcomes.

In addition to developing relationships in support of collaboration (Duke, 2008), these leaders also changed the culture of their schools by intentionally impacting a shift in values from an existing state to a new desired state.

Since values drive behaviors (Wagner & Simpson, 2008), shifting the values in their schools resulted in changes in behaviors that promote collaboration and student achievement.

We refer to these two real-life scenarios as "The $250,000 Zinger" and "Cold Mountain Disaster."

THE $250,000 ZINGER

"My first full school year in administration was perhaps the most financially challenging for public schools in California, with significant cuts made to school funding," the novice leader said. "This came on the heels of already challenging years in which the school had to cut back. The school was going to receive $250,000 less in funding than the previous year, and those monies had to be cut from the budget. This was bad news, and I was the messenger."

This leader was faced with the challenge of how to deliver the budget news in a way that promoted collaboration and trust while reducing frustration, blame, and the potential chasm between school administration and staff.

To accomplish this, he drew on what he'd learned at a school leadership program at California State University Dominguez Hills in Southern California. The program focused on several pathways for developing leaders, two of which are significant to this story: adaptive leadership

THE **FOUR ABILITIES** AND **FIVE CAPABILITIES** OF COMMUNICATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Craftsmanship

Flexibility — Dynamic presence — Efficacy

Adaptability — Receptivity

Empathy

Interdependence — Consciousness
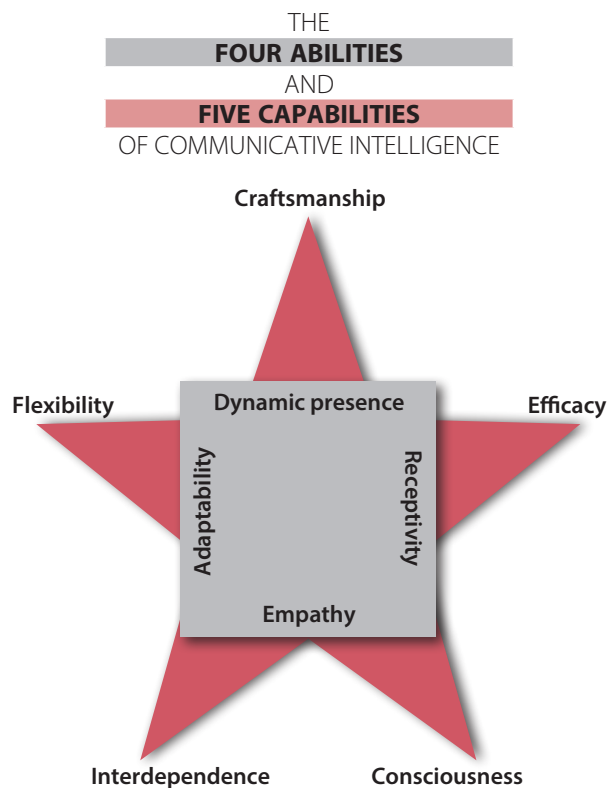
(Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) and communicative intelligence (Zoller, 2015).

Adaptive leadership is grounded in the idea that existing issues in organizations fall short in current knowledge, skills, abilities, and values used to resolve complex issues in schools. New knowledge, skills, abilities, and, most importantly, a shift in existing values and beliefs are necessary for creating solutions. Adaptive leadership guides leaders on how best to shift to a culture that embraces conflict and innovation.

However, adaptive leadership alone is not sufficient.

Leaders must also develop what is called communicative intelligence because communication is at the core of leading. Communicative intelligence incorporates the states of mind (Costa & Garmston, 2002) with several cross-cultural verbal and nonverbal patterns of communication (Zoller, 2015).

Communicative intelligence is the cognitive and emotional thought processes that determine the elements of verbal and nonverbal communication. Within these cognitive and emotional thought processes are five capabilities: craftsmanship, efficacy, consciousness, interdependence, and flexibility (see illustration on p. 35).

Craftsmanship is the "what" of communication and includes gestures, pausing, stance, location, voice tone and pitch, breathing, paraphrasing, and probing. The works of Zoller (2008, 2015) and Zoller and Landry (2010) identify more than 50 patterns.

Efficacy is the belief that you can navigate the situations in front of you, no matter how challenging the topic or the relationships.

Consciousness is the link necessary to access the other capabilities. Consciousness includes self-awareness of what verbal and nonverbal skills you are using as well as awareness of incoming verbal and nonverbal messages from those with whom you are communicating.

Interdependence is knowing you are integral to the system as well as awareness of your connection to other systems. For instance, as a principal, your systems include school, classroom, district, and community.

Flexibility is the ability to adapt and adjust in the moment as communication unfolds. Imagine a kayaker on a whitewater ride, planning and executing in a dynamic and adaptive environment.

The four abilities in the square of the illustration on p. 35 — receptivity, empathy, adaptability, and dynamic presence — can be considered the "how" of communication.

Receptivity refers to the communication skills that influence the person you are talking with to be more receptive to your message.

In this case, the leader carefully choreographed his message to ensure that staff would remain open and resourceful in their thinking. He wrote the message on an easel and placed the easel on the side of the room, creating space between himself and the message.

He used a flat voice tone and pitch when talking about the budget cut, and his voice was rhythmic and inviting when talking with staff, creating a sense of inclusion and invitation to participate.

Empathy is the perception of being listened to and understood while, at the same time, having a deep emotional connection with the other person. Empathy is a key element in social intelligence (Goleman, 2006).

To achieve empathy, the leader displayed mindfulness. "I

view mindfulness as the process of listening, acknowledging, and then responding to teachers and staff by paraphrasing and anticipating objections and concerns," he said. "I believe this mindset was the most critical single large-scale component that, along with the communication skills taught and implemented, made me a better communicator across multiple modalities. This really helped create and foster an environment of collaboration rather than confrontation."

Adaptability is the use of communication skills to navigate across organizational and individual cultures. As a school leader, our storyteller was part of the school culture, yet independent of the individual culture of teachers and departments. He had to create a culture of connectedness, which he did by paraphrasing, using the easel to separate the message from the messenger, and acknowledging others' emotions.

Dynamic presence is ability to navigate in the moment. The administrator had to act in the moment as emotions flowed.

"I considered possibilities and ideas that would work with least impact to students and staff," he said. "I planned on focusing on doing what's best for students and staff. I considered which staff might be upset or more vocally hostile and how I might address them. I think I spent nearly two hours preparing for a 30-minute meeting.

"Ultimately, the meeting was one of the best I ever conducted. I listened to and acknowledged their concerns and frustrations. The cut in funding was externalized, and blame didn't enter our group. Instead, everyone took on a solution-focused approach and appreciated being included in the decision-making process.

"This more inclusive approach, a high level of transparency, and frequent and clear communication promoted an environment that allowed staff to focus on students and, ultimately, continually improve their outcomes."

This school leader used elements from adaptive leadership that include thinking politically (considering the multiple perspectives of a diverse staff), orchestrating conflict (placing the issue in the room yet separate from the messenger), and turning up the heat (collaboratively working with staff to develop an array of potential solutions).

He used communicative intelligence to plan (craftsmanship, efficacy, consciousness, interdependence) the 30-minute meeting. As the meeting progressed, he used the elements of communicative intelligence to navigate a meeting that ended with a collective focus on students rather than the budget.

THE COLD MOUNTAIN DISASTER

Sometimes we walk into a situation with a feeling of angst telling us it isn't going to go well. An assistant principal tells one such story about a difficult meeting with a parent who was unhappy with the outcome.

In a follow-up meeting, the assistant principal — another

novice school leader — implemented several elements of communicative intelligence. She reframed the issue and intentionally developed enough rapport and empathy with the parent to gain the level of trust necessary to provide support for her child.

"Last year, I encountered a very confrontational parent whose child needed a lot of support, both in academics and behavior," the assistant principal said. "Even though I knew this parent well, and we had had many meetings throughout the year in my office about her child, I worried that the news of a recommended assessment for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the child would be a difficult conversation to have, and it was.

"The parent sat, surrounded by teachers, administrators, and school resource teacher, listening to everything that was wrong with her daughter and how the school knew best how to design and deliver support. The breaking point was the recommendation for testing that the parent believed was eventual determination of the special education label to be placed on her daughter."

The meeting did not go well and ended with no recommendation or solution. The assistant principal asked the parent to come in later that week to meet one-on-one. The parent agreed, and the assistant principal knew she had to plan carefully. Communicative intelligence would be crucial in this second meeting.

This administrator orchestrated the conversation with conscious and deliberate intent. She sat at a 90-degree angle to the parent so she could see her body movements (consciousness and dynamic presence). She gained rapport by matching the parent's breathing as well as her language and emotional energy.

She showed empathy by tilting her head to the side in agreement. When stating her reasons for wanting to assess the student, she displayed a firm demeanor, shifting her head upright when addressing the data.

She gestured toward three locations on the table to identify and separate the reasons from solutions. "I said, 'Your child needs an evaluation for the following reasons: It will give us insight into what your child needs (first location), your child will be able to receive services free of charge that may help improve both academics and behavior (second location), and your child will not be moved into a special day class if there is a special education need (third location).'"

The assistant principal used those same three locations as she stated her goals for the student.

When the parent felt pressured, the assistant principal turned down the heat (a tactic from adaptive leadership) by providing a structure and timeline of events and what everyone's role would be: "We can test your child in the next two weeks. The following people will be involved in the assessment. The results will be communicated to you by X date in a face-to-face meeting with me. Any decisions about special education placements can wait until we receive the results of the evaluation.

Your only role as a parent to start is to give consent and continue communicating with us your needs and that of your child."

The parent agreed to the assessment, and the results showed that the child showed signs of a learning disability. The student now has supports in place and services to help him succeed and adapt.

The mindfulness this leader displayed exemplifies a highly proficient level of communicative intelligence. Her ability to use communicative intelligence in real time resulted in an outcome that might not have been achieved otherwise.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

These two stories show that leading and communicating are deliberate and conscious choices. The framework of communicative intelligence identifies the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements of communication necessary to navigate the challenging situations school leaders face daily in their complex environment.

One of the graduates of the school leadership program, an assistant principal, put it best when she said, "Communication is the basis from which relationships are made, teamwork is established, and clarity around goals and responsibilities is given. Without successful communication skills, even the most knowledgeable leader can lose support from his or her team."

Another graduate said, "I must consciously use techniques [from communicative intelligence] to ensure that students feel listened to and acknowledged. Most frequently, students are primarily upset because they do not feel they had the opportunity to explain their side and were instead judged prematurely. In order to allow students the space and environment to share their own story, I paraphrase to convey that I am following along (and can later use that information to share with parents). The entire conversation is carefully orchestrated to maintain rapport while also gathering the information needed to make decisions about consequences or next steps."

Communication is an essential skill set for school leaders to navigate the whitewater rapids created by the complex and chaotic nature of daily life in schools. Communicative intelligence is a way of thinking and acting that, when woven into a leader's internal fabric, can result in an adaptive culture focused on student achievement.

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Navigation aids

CLEARLY A NEED

Five cohorts later, 80 Georgia leaders have demonstrated their growth in the program outcomes. The competitive application process does not reward central office experience. The cohorts are about 50% principals and 50% central office leaders. This mix has been crucial to the program's success.

Since the first cohort in 2009, a nationwide conversation about central office leadership has surfaced (Honig et. al, 2010). The Wallace Foundation made a significant investment in principal preparation (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013).

> As a school leader, could often work with just one contact. As a district leader, Frannie Johannsen needs to amass a web of contacts and possibilities.

Since that time, additional funds have been included to highlight the importance of principal supervision and district leadership. Georgia's Gwinnett County Public Schools developed both leadership and aspiring principals programs. In 2013, these programs included a cohort of central office leaders, highlighting the district's commitment to building high-quality district leaders.

When these nine shifts are negotiated artfully, program graduates move from being an expert to sharing expertise. With these supports, a career path to district leadership is clear, relevant, and attractive. District leaders with these new skill sets make a difference for schools and the children those buildings serve.

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MAKE THE MOST

By William Powell and Ochan Kusuma-Powell

High-quality schools are very busy organizations, and whenever there is a new development in the field of education that requires teacher attention (peer coaching, personalized learning, metacognition, brain research, cooperative learning, etc.), many teachers ask: "But where will the time come from?"

In our years of facilitating professional learning to schools around the world, we have heard this question hundreds of times. At first, we assumed that it might be a way for teachers to mask resistance to a new idea or initiative. But we have heard it so many times from hard-working and dedicated teachers that we have come to realize that teachers meant exactly what they were saying: *Where will the time come from?*

HOW WE TALK ABOUT TIME

Time is a slippery topic. Linguistically, we treat time as a substance — something tangible that can be measured, rationed, bought and sold, budgeted, saved, or even wasted. The problem with this is that it gives the appearance that we have some control over time. We don't.

We tend to confuse duration (the passage of time) with the tasks we engage in. Time is not a substance, nor does it act like one — especially in organizations committed to learning.

Bemoaning a lack of time in a very busy school is rather like gorging on fast food and then blaming gravity for the weight gain.

For most of the 20th century, schools were thought to be learning factories, and our concept of time came from an assembly line mindset. Students were products, and the subject-area content was our raw material.

Like factories, we used bells and whistles to divide the daily schedule. Punctuality and efficiency came to be perceived as moral issues. When a student learned in what we thought to be an inefficient manner or was regularly late to class, we questioned his or her character and upbringing. The emphasis was on student and teacher compliance and conformity.

To a large extent, we are still under the influence of Frederick Winslow Taylor's time and motion studies (1911) and his obsession with measureable productivity.

OF EVERY DAY

EXAMINE YOUR PRACTICE TO SIFT OUT TIME WASTERS

ACTIVITY OVERLOAD

Conscientious schools are often very busy places. Teachers frequently work 10- to 12-hour days and can be found at 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening leading a musical rehearsal, coaching a sports team, preparing unit plans, or developing new assessment material.

Unfortunately, busy-ness doesn't always equate with high-quality learning. In fact, once a school becomes too busy, that overload of activity often serves as a barrier to deep learning — for both students and adults. Some well-meaning schools suffer from organizational attention deficit disorder (Goleman, 2013).

We have a friend who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). She will ask questions but provide no time for anyone to reply. She constantly interrupts others and flits from one activity to another. She will start a sentence on one subject and change the topic midstream. At times, she can be a difficult person to interact with.

Several years ago, she discovered that her grandson might also have ADHD, and she was concerned that there might be a genetic connection. One evening, she asked us: "How severe … how serious is ADHD?" And she actually paused for a response. We told her that ADHD is serious as it inhibits a person from pursuing his or her goals.

We would say the same for schools. Some schools claim to be on the cutting edge because they embrace every new initiative that comes along. Each year, a new series of goals and objectives arrives with a new and puzzling nomenclature. These schools are so busy that the truly important is often squeezed out and replaced by the merely urgent.

In these schools, teacher stress levels are often very high — not only because there are so many initiatives underway, but also because there doesn't appear to be any connection or link between the initiatives. There is no coherence, and therefore the goals appear fragmented and arbitrary.

ATTENTION AND INTENTION

It is a truism to say that intelligence and happiness depend almost exclusively on what we choose to pay attention to. However, this is much easier said than done. Our individual and collective attention is often drawn in many different directions. The media spend billions of dollars each year simply to garner our attention. Paying attention to what is truly important is becoming more and more difficult — including how we use our professional time.

Covey (1989) has suggested that one of the fundamental keys to time and task management is to classify and prioritize

TIME AND TASK MANAGEMENT MATRIX

Individually or with your team, enter examples from your daily professional life that fit within the four quadrants. Once you have done so, explore the quadrants looking for patterns. What insights are emerging?

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	QUADRANT 1 • Crises • Deadline-driven projects • Pressing issues and problems • Health and safety issues Examples: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	QUADRANT 2 • Personal professional learning • Structured reflection • Peer coaching • Preventive activities • Relationship building • Recognizing new opportunities • Planning • Professional inquiry • Recreation Examples: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
NOT IMPORTANT	QUADRANT 3 • Interruptions • Some phone calls, emails, social networking • Some meetings • Popular activities • Proximate, pressing activities Examples: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	QUADRANT 4 • Trivia • Some mail • Some calls, email • Time wasters Examples: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Adapted from Covey, 1989.

our responsibilities in terms of their importance and urgency. He has proposed a matrix similar to the one above.

Quadrant 1 is the domain of tasks that are both urgent and important. Inevitably, we can expect to spend some of our professional time in quadrant 1. From time to time, urgent crises will come upon us without warning. However, when we dwell too much in quadrant 1, we become crisis managers, rushing to put out fires. We are reactive as opposed to proactive.

Quadrant 1 can be seductive. The longer one dwells in it, the more it comes to consume one's life. The long-term effects of living in quadrant 1 are unhealthy stress and burnout.

Quadrants 3 and 4 are the domains of those who live irresponsible lives. The tasks in these arenas are simply not important, and, in quadrant 3, the urgency is coming from someone else — not from our own deeply held values and beliefs.

Covey suggests that quadrant 2, the domain of the important but not urgent, is the place to be. It is in quadrant 2 that we engage in structured reflection, build trusting relationships,

envision the future, design short- and long-terms plans, and take preventive maintenance measures that preempt crises from occurring in the first place. Quadrant 2 is where our actions are deeply aligned and congruent with our values. It is the home of responsibility and integrity.

It sounds simple, but staying in quadrant 2 requires considerable self-discipline. In order to say yes to quadrant 2, we must be prepared to say no to other activities. Jim Collins (2001) counsels leaders not to prepare a daily to-do list, but rather to prepare a daily list of things NOT to do. In order to pay attention to the important, we must ruthlessly re-examine the distractions in our professional and personal lives. Our modern, digitized world makes this increasingly difficult, but no less crucial.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN EXPERIMENT

Time pressure, the sense of urgency we feel when confronting a deadline or time-sensitive task, has been shown to have

a strong influence on our behavior and decision making. How we perceive time can actually influence our ethical behavior and moral compass.

The classic research in this field is commonly referred to as the Good Samaritan Experiment. Researchers Darley and Batson (1973) investigated how individual Princeton seminary students might behave in preparation for giving a brief sermon on the biblical story of the Good Samaritan. The seminarians were told that the sermon was to be presented at a building across campus and that their presentation would be critically evaluated by their supervisors. So the stakes were reasonably high.

As each individual completed his preparation, he was told either that he was late and must hurry to the prescribed sermon venue or that he had plenty of time but he might as well head over now. The only difference in the two groups was the manipulation of their sense of urgency.

As the seminarians walked across the campus, each encountered a person (a research confederate) slumped over in an alley in obvious great physical distress. The seminarians were faced with the decision of whether to assist the stranger — as the biblical Good Samaritan had done — or hurry to their presentation. The question that interested the researchers was whether time pressure would influence the students' behavior. Specifically, would *doing* the right thing take precedence over giving a sermon *about* the right thing?

The seminarians' sense of urgency had a profound effect on their behavior. The vast majority of those who believed they had plenty of time stopped to assist the stranger in distress. However, more than 90% of the students who believed they were late for their presentation failed to render assistance. Darley and Batson's seminal research demonstrates that time perspectives change people's behavior (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008) so that they may act in ways that are actually counter to their deeply held beliefs and values.

For this reason, we need to be doubly cautious about activities that dwell in quadrants 1 and 3. Urgency can blind us to real ethical and moral concerns.

3 WAYS THAT SCHOOLS SQUANDER TIME

When teachers ask where to find time for differentiation or peer coaching or other professional learning, there is a recognition that we are busy people and perhaps an unspoken assumption that we are already using our time wisely. This may or may not be the case. Let's examine three common ways in which schools and school people squander time.

1. Generating feedback that isn't used.

One of the greatest wastes of time for teachers is generating feedback on student work that students then ignore or reject. One English teacher recalls that, as a young teacher, he would spend hours and hours over the weekends marking student essays. He was very conscientious about identifying students' er-

rors and providing suggestions for how they might improve. He was much less conscientious about making sure that students actually used his feedback to make revisions. Teacher feedback that isn't used by students squanders billions of hours of teacher time each year.

2. Meetings that don't use protocols or facilitators.

We have all heard the low groan of teachers when someone proposes yet another meeting. How did meetings get such a bad name? Many of the meetings we attend are enormous wastes of time. Some should never be held in the first place, and others should take half the time that they actually do. There are two separate and important issues here.

The first is to determine whether the topic or issue really requires collective thought and inquiry. David Perkins calls this the lawn mower paradox (2003) in that it is much easier for seven men to mow a lawn than it is for seven men to design a more efficient lawn mower.

There are some tasks that do not lend themselves easily to collaboration. For example, if something needs to be written, it is often much more efficient to have someone write a draft and then have the group edit it. Writing by committee can be frustrating and time-consuming. We need to carefully consider whether a task actually requires collaborative effort.

Second, meetings need to use protocols that focus the group's attention and provide structure to the conversation. Meetings that don't use protocols and are not well-facilitated often stray off task and the conversation meanders, much to participants' irritation.

There is a common misunderstanding that using protocols in meetings may inhibit equitable contributions from all members — somehow using an explicit meeting structure impairs democracy, and it is more important to hear everyone's voice than it is to be productive.

Efficiency and affiliation do not need to be diametrically opposed. They can actually serve to complement each other. The key here is skillful facilitation. In our experience, unstructured meetings often result in members taking attentional leave — deserting a frustrating meeting mentally, if not physically.

3. The failed system of teacher evaluation.

Conduct an experiment in your school. Ask a large group of teachers how many of them have experienced significant professional learning and growth as a result of the traditional process of teacher evaluation.

We have done so in many, many schools. The positive response is minuscule. Most teachers (and many administrators) have come to perceive the annual process of teacher evaluation as an enormous waste of time — something mindlessly forced upon the evaluator and the evaluated.

If the purpose of traditional teacher evaluation is to develop

SUCCESS
What it really
looks like

WHAT SUCCESS REALLY LOOKS LIKE

BRIGHT SPOTS AND BLOTS DEFINE A CAREER TRAJECTORY

By Jennifer Abrams

SUCCESS

What people
think it looks
like

The image of success not being a straight, upward arrow but a big, messy scribbled blob defines my career trajectory perfectly. My work has moved forward, pushed upward, and stretched further, but it hasn't been a smooth and easy path.

For nine years, I was a high school English teacher. Then Macbeth died in the last act every hour on the hour, and I needed to move on. I became a new teacher coach and a professional learning facilitator in one school district for 16 years, where I eventually found my consulting voice and moved from professional learning facilitator to author, consultant, and speaker.

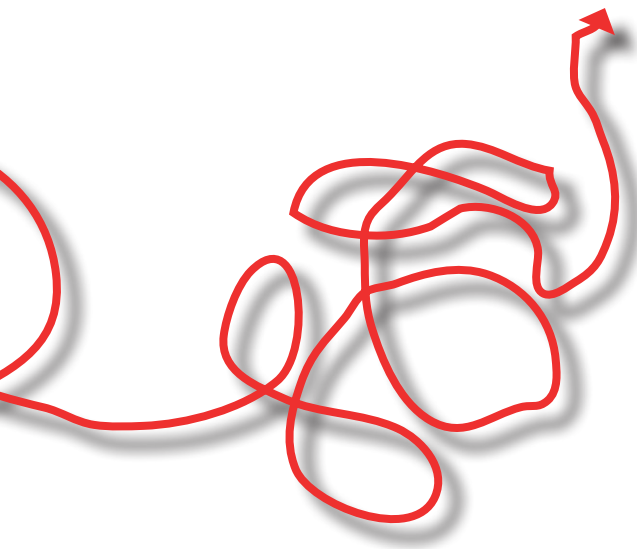In this last incarnation, I have reflected on the doodle

blob of career growth and new adventures and found there are both spots of bright ink and messy dark splotches and blots. Icks and yeas! Stings and ouches as well as audible bravas. The real trajectory. Here is a sample of my blots and bright spots.

Blot: Early on in my attempt at working with adults, I present to a group on the topic "Hard Conversations About Race." My parents attend (the only time they both attend). I do it solo, a white woman, beyond uninformed about the deeper processes at work around my white privilege. My parents sit in the back. People give me feedback in many forms. I grow. Bright spot emerges out of some challenging feedback.

Blot: I work with teachers in a prison. I use my so-called management tool, a chime, to bring people back from small-group discussions. After lunch, I return to find that someone in the group has taken my chime. I use a hand signal for the rest of the day. The chime is returned at the end of the afternoon. I learn to read my audience more closely. Again, a bright spot emerges out of a stinging learning. I continue to see that discomfort is a good thing.

Blot: I sit next to someone at a conference and am told point blank that, as I haven't been one, I have no business teaching administrators. I spend a good part of over a year believing her. The experience leaves me scarred.

Bright spot: A veteran colleague and mentor shares with me a truth that provides me unbelievable sustenance as I move forward in my own writing. He tells me that when he and his co-author started writing, they were just making it up. I feel less of a fraud. I publish.

Bright spot: At a silent auction, I win a day with a

Jennifer Abrams

Learning Forward consultant who graciously invites me into her home. The day of consulting consists of me asking her about how to become one. She shows me her office, in her basement, with piles and boxes and sticky notes. I am relieved to see the mess. I then spot some nail polish on her desk. She tells me she sometimes paints her nails while on a conference call to stay engaged. I breathe a big sigh. I think, "I can do this."

Bright spot: I take a leave from my school district to see if I can make it as a consultant. I spend a year worrying about having to earn enough. I vote for Obama for many reasons, but one is so I will have health care. I take another big sigh of relief and then do more continued deep breathing as the political hot potato of health care is tossed about. Bright spot or blot? To be continued …

Blot: After two years on leave, I spend significant time expressing my appreciation to my former school district and write what I consider to be a gracious resignation letter. I even quote Thoreau, who speaks to his need to "go on the deck of the world," and I speak to my need to do the same. I get no response from Human Resources. In a few months, I hear from Benefits telling me my benefits will expire that summer. I realize that once you are gone, in some instances, you are really gone.

Bright spot: I am invited to present in Vietnam. I toast to myself solo at the rooftop bar of my hotel. I feel proud that I have trusted myself and am making it happen.

Blot: I facilitate my first day dizzy with jet lag, and the group rebels — in a polite way. I realize that the set-up of this experience hasn't been clear to the group, and they share their anxieties and frustrations aloud, loudly with me. I am unprepared for their resistance on both a physical and emotional level.

Bright spot: I learn from the experience of an extremely resistant group. I make a commitment to be much more involved with schools as to how to roll out a new initiative.

Blot: As I start my consulting, I end up at hotel restaurants eating alone.

Blot: I find myself eating alone at hotel restaurants a lot.

Bright spot: I begin to introduce myself to other "alone folks" at the hotel bar. I learn an immense amount from people I would never have met if I had not been on the road. I learn how the Common Core does make someone career ready. I am appreciative of those who work in hazardous waste or with the FBI or in other challenging fields.

Blot: While facilitating a group, I find myself at odds

with an oppositional participant. He plays Solitaire openly on his iPad. I am crushed. This workshop is such important work. How can he not see this? I spend two weeks carrying around an insecurity that what I have put into the world is not worthy of another's consideration. I talk with my therapist. I meditate. Ugh. I feel dismissed.

Bright spot: Later in the year, again concerned my work wasn't a right fit with the culture of the group in which I was presenting, I find myself pouting in my hotel room. I get into an elevator with a big wheel in the profession. I am intimidated. We get off the elevator, and a woman comes up to ME to tell me what a great job I did in my session. She asks the big wheel if he will take a picture of us. Not accustomed to that role, he pauses as she hands him her camera. I grin widely. My life is forever altered.

Blot/bright spot: I present in Canada. It is a respectful group. Quiet. Too quiet. I worry the work doesn't resonate. I am driven home by a colleague who says the Twitterverse was on fire with tweets during the day. She also received texts as to

how good the day was going. I am delighted and surprised and puzzled all at once. I question what engagement looks like and begin to trust the work even more. I feel validated.

Bright spot: I spend a Saturday night reflecting on my career path. I am happy to spend a Saturday night doing so. I think of Paulo Coelho: "If you think adventure is dangerous, try routine. It's lethal." I celebrate, solo, in one of those hotel rooms I have mentioned above. Ah, what a squiggled blob of a successful career I have.

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Make the most of every day

professional learning that results in enhanced performance in the classroom, it has been a miserable failure. Not only has it not produced meaningful professional learning and not enhanced student learning, it has served to create dependency relationships and has infantilized teachers.

It has also done much to undermine the vital culture of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2004) that must form the fabric of culture in high-quality schools. We desperately need a new perspective on teacher supervision. We would argue that, in order for teachers to become self-directed adult learners, they must engage in accurate and healthy self-assessment. Research from schools and the corporate sector strongly suggests that external evaluative feedback actually *inhibits* accurate self-assessment (Sanford, 1995).

EXAMINE OUR PRACTICES

It's not the quantity of time at our disposal that is at issue. It is how wisely we use what is available. As a profession, we urgently need to examine our current practices critically and ruthlessly to determine which may be inefficient, which may waste time, and which may actually be counterproductive.

This will not be popular, and the irony is that some may perceive such an examination as a waste of time. However, as Bob Garmston and Bruce Wellman (2008) have written, "Any group that is too busy to reflect on how it is working together is a group that is too busy to improve."

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ACTIVITIES *vs.* OUTCOMES

THE DIFFERENCE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

By Janice Bradley, Linda Munger, and Shirley Hord

As they approached the principal's office in their school, teacher leaders Jose and Judith discussed their actions regarding their students' lack of understanding fractions. They shared with Cesar, the district mathematics coordinator, how the 3rd-grade professional learning community had been working to articulate a data-based outcome for their team's learning that will lead to students' successful work with fractions.

"Thank you for meeting with us today, Stephanie," Jose greeted the principal. "We thought it would be helpful if we all worked together to gain clarity on our next steps."

"Thanks very much, Jose, for providing me with the details of your discussions and efforts," the principal said.

"Your professional learning community is doing an excellent job using multiple data sources to explore your students' low performance and identify their lack of understanding of fractions as the problem. Now I understand that you are trying to gain clarity about setting the outcome(s) for your own learning that will lead to more effective instruction for your students."

Jose and Judith nodded and said, "That's it, Stephanie. We have come to you and Cesar for support in our next efforts."

BEGINNING AT THE END

In the article "Focus first on outcomes," published in the August 2015 issue of *JSD* (Bradley, Munger, & Hord, 2015), the intended adult learning outcome was to gain

an understanding of identifying outcomes first, not activities, and to create awareness of a logic model as a tool for planning change. Although typically educators start by identifying resources and activities first, a logic model asks educators to think backward by focusing first on outcomes and requires these questions to be answered in sequence:

1. What is the problem we intend to impact?
2. What will it look like when we achieve the desired outcome?
3. What teacher behaviors need to change for that outcome to be achieved?
4. What knowledge or skills do teachers need before their behaviors will change?
5. What activities do teachers need to engage in for their professional learning?
6. What resources will be required to achieve the desired outcome? (McCawley, n.d.)

In the opening scenario in that article, the 3rd-grade teachers in the professional learning community want to increase

This article is a follow-up to "Focus first on outcomes" (Bradley, Munger, & Hord, 2015), published in the August 2015 issue of *JSD*. That article set the stage by creating awareness of the need and purpose for thinking first about outcomes, not activities, when starting a change project. This article is designed to build knowledge, skills, and dispositions for how to consider outcomes first in order to see change.

their knowledge and skills in how to teach students to develop understanding of fractions (educator learning outcome). Some of the activities used to accomplish this learning outcome were to review the research on how students develop understanding of fractions and interact with math specialists to help them. The table on p. 50 is a logic model the 3rd-grade team developed and shared with the principal and district math coordinator to solicit their support for next steps.

LOGIC MODEL AS A ROAD MAP TO REACH INTENDED GOAL

What do you want to accomplish?

Goal statement (intended results for students): By end of school year, 3rd-grade students will increase their understanding of fractions and be able to precisely articulate their understanding of fractions as a result of teachers learning how to effectively teach fractions.

RESOURCES *Time, materials, people*	PROCESSES/ ACTIVITIES *Professional learning*	EDUCATOR LEARNING OUTCOMES *Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions*	EDUCATOR PRACTICE OUTCOMES *Changes in educator practice*	INTENDED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS *Changes in student results*
• Professional learning community sessions. • Math specialists (school, district).	• Meet in professional learning community sessions. • Study, analyze, and interpret student data. • Review the research on how to teach students to understand fractions. • Interact with math specialists.	• Increased knowledge and skills in teaching students how to develop understanding of fractions. • Recognition of the value of teaching fractions.	• Implementation of effective teaching strategies to increase students' understanding of fractions. • Demonstration of enhanced content knowledge when teaching fractions.	• Evidence showing students' increased understanding of fractions. • Increase in the number of students scoring proficient or higher on fractions.

Sources: Killion (2008), Love, Stiles, Mundry, & DiRanna (2008).

MAKING A CHANGE

Hord (2016) states that "any change effort to improve practice derives from making a change from some feature or factor that is not producing desired results to one that holds the potential for doing so; and, to make this change, learning is the imperative — learning what the change is and how to use it. … [L]earning is the pathway" (p. 51). Hord and Roussin (2013) identified six implementation strategies for a change effort:

1. Develop and communicate a shared vision.
2. Plan and provide resources.
3. Invest in professional learning.
4. Check progress.
5. Continue to give support.
6. Create an atmosphere and context for change (p. 13).

6 STRATEGIES FOR A CHANGE

Based on the opening scenario, teacher leaders Jose and Judith solicited the support of the principal and district math coordinator to collaboratively engage in learning the six strategies and how to use them. This would ensure teachers gain the necessary knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions (educator performance outcome) to increase students' understanding of fractions (student performance outcome). The table on p. 51 provides a tool with definitions, questions, and examples of

> **An IC map provides a shared vision of the most ideal way of implementing the components of a change.**

evidence for each of the six strategies to guide successful implementation to reach the intended outcomes and results identified in the logic model.

1. Develop and communicate a shared vision.

An Innovation Configuration (IC) map describes the major components of a change when it is in use. Hord (2016) states, "These pictures 'show' the outcome in operation and show the action (who is doing what) when the outcome is achieved" (p. 54).

An IC map provides a shared vision of the most ideal way of implementing the components of a change. The IC map is developed with the ideal variation of each component placed on the left end of a continuum and decreasing levels of variations progressing to the right (Learning Forward, 2012). The table on p. 52 shows an IC map that the 3rd-grade teachers might use for increasing their effectiveness in teaching students an understanding of fractions.

Strategy 1 in practice: 3rd-grade teacher leaders, with sup-

6 STRATEGIES FOR A CHANGE

Strategy	Definition	Questions	Evidence
1 Develop and communicate a shared vision.	A shared mental image of the future as a result of successful implementation of the change.	• What do we want the change to look like once it has been fully implemented? • How do we ensure that the vision is a shared vision?	Teacher leaders and math coordinator facilitated a process where teachers identified key components and created a shared image by drafting an Innovation Configurations (IC) map describing ideal classroom practices of the vision.
2 Plan and provide resources.	The road map for change and the time, tools, and staff needed to implement the change.	• What time, tools, and staff will be needed for ongoing planning, professional learning, and collaboration? • How will we know that our plan has been implemented and is having the desired impact?	• Time was scheduled for regular weekly collaboration. • Teacher leaders and math specialists conducted observations of teachers to pilot the IC map and make necessary adjustments. The principal and teacher leaders used the IC map to plan and identify material and human resources needed for professional learning.
3 Invest in professional learning.	Provides implementers with what they need to know and be able to do.	• What professional learning does the staff need? • How do we design and provide professional learning to meet educator needs throughout the process of implementation?	Teachers engaged in two learning designs supporting them to change their knowledge, skills, and dispositions, then implement the change in their practice.
4 Check progress.	Provides strategies to identify emerging needs of teachers, clarify questions, and solve small problems, and provides evidence of teacher implementation and impact on student learning.	What types of data do we need? • Evidence of implementation. • Evidence of impact.	• Teachers identified changes to their practice and asked teams to look for transfer of learning during walk-throughs. • Teachers engaged in reflection of changes in their practices and compared students' pre- and post test results.
5 Continue to give support.	Ongoing strategic and targeted responses to support implementation based on identified needs.	• What forms of assistance will maintain the momentum of implementation? • How can we incorporate what we learn from monitoring to make necessary adjustments?	• Walk-through teams provided feedback to individual teachers and to the 3rd-grade team. • Math coordinator attended professional learning communities as teachers planned their fraction unit. • The math coach worked with teachers individually as well as facilitated peer coaching for professional learning communities.
6 Create an atmosphere and context for change.	Nurturing a culture and climate in the organization to support implementation of the change.	• How do we create a sense of urgency about the need for implementation of the change? • How do we build a sense of mutual responsibility and accountability for implementation?	Teachers made a commitment to engage in their learning first by being willing to be risk-takers, reflecting on what is or isn't working, and using information from ongoing assessments to make necessary changes. Team commitments included being flexible, trustworthy, mutually respectful, and willing to try new things.

Source: Adapted from Hord & Roussin, 2013, pp. 23-24.

TEACHER'S IC MAP FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF FRACTIONS

THE TEACHER …			
Component 1: Selects content objectives.			
1	2	3	4
Selects content objectives and uses a sequence to teach students to gain mastery of core learning standards for understanding fractions.	Chooses content objectives aligned with core learning standards for understanding fractions.	Identifies objectives from district math curriculum for teaching fractions.	Refers to textbook for objectives for teaching fractions.
Component 2: Engages students in learning.			
Engages students in differentiated lessons according to their level of knowledge of fractions based on assessments.	Engages students in a variety of differentiated lessons.	Uses a variety of lesson activities to engage students both individually and in a group.	Follows traditional methods of teaching fractions.
Component 3: Assesses progress.			
Uses a variety of formative assessments daily (e.g. teacher observations, group activities, class discussions), and uses district assessments for evidence of mastery.	Relies on classroom observation of students' work and on teacher-constructed tests.	Employs no regular or systematic assessments.	

port of math coordinator, facilitated the development of an IC map through a process resulting in all professional learning community members visualizing what the change will look like as implementation progresses.

2. Plan and provide resources.

Resources (material, time, personnel, dollars) are allocated, and reallocated, to ensure that the activities maximize teacher learning and changes in practices to impact student achievement.

Strategy 2 in practice: Teacher leaders gathered essential material and human resources (state standards, math specialists) to assist teachers in achieving their learning outcomes. The 3rd-grade team scheduled collaborative time to engage in ongoing learning to focus on the components of the IC map to promote effective teaching of students' understanding of fractions.

3. Invest in professional learning.

Hord and Roussin (2013) say that change efforts require the acquisition of new content knowledge and skills in instructional techniques and strategies. Effective professional learning provides teachers opportunities to learn together, practice new instructional techniques and strategies, observe model lessons, and receive coaching and feedback on the use of new practices.

When choosing learning designs for professional learning, teachers must consider first the intended outcome based on

analysis of student and teacher learning needs. According to Drago-Severson, Roy, and Von Frank (2015), common features of multiple learning designs include "active engagement, modeling, reflection, metacognition, application, feedback, ongoing support, and formative and summative assessment that support change in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practice" (pp. xiii-xiv).

Joyce and Showers (2002) found that, when working with teams engaged in coaching, three collective agreements were helpful in governing their collaborative work:
- "Commitment to practice/use whatever change the faculty has decided to implement.
- Assistance and support of each other in the change process, including shared planning of instructional objectives and development of materials and lessons.
- Collection of data, both on the implementation of their planned change and on student effects relevant to the school's identified target for student growth" (p. 88).

Strategy 3 in practice: The teachers chose two learning designs to gain content knowledge for teaching fractions and skills in instructional techniques and strategies to develop students' understanding of fractions. The first was learning collaboratively and applying the components of the IC map in the classroom (see table above). The second was engagement in a learning design called Collaborative Planning, Teaching, and Assessing to sustain and support implementation of effective instructional

MONITORING TOOLS ALIGNED WITH EDUCATOR OUTCOMES

Teacher learning outcomes *Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions*	Teacher practice outcomes *Changes in educator practice*
Increase of teachers' knowledge and skills in developing students' understanding of fractions. Recognition of the value of teaching fractions.	Implementation of effective teaching strategies to increase students' understanding of fractions. Demonstration of enhanced content knowledge when teaching fractions.
• Pre- and post teacher content assessment. • Teacher logs/journals. • Teacher surveys. • Teacher self-reflections or self-assessments.	• Classroom observations with protocols or checklists. • Classroom walk-throughs, focus on teachers' instruction of the "new." • Teacher/student surveys. • Teacher/student interviews. • Demonstration lessons. • IC maps.

Source: Love, Stiles, Mundry, & DiRanna (2008).

content and skills. During the three-hour learning cycle, teachers co-design a lesson in the first hour, teach the lesson in the classroom in the second hour, and assess student understanding of fractions using new practices in the third hour (Bradley, 2015, p. 44).

4. Check progress.

Affholter (1994) states that an outcomes monitoring system includes "what to measure, how many measures to use, how (and how often) to measure and report, and how to present the information" (p. 105). Data collection needs to be a routine part of the change effort to ensure progress toward the desired educator outcomes. The chart above shows some useful monitoring tools that are aligned with identified teacher outcomes (identified in the logic model on p. 50).

Strategy 4 in practice: The principal, math specialists, and teacher leaders conducted observations using the IC map to identify the degree of transfer of teachers' new learning to the classrooms. The teachers used the IC map as a self-assessment. During professional learning community time, the 3rd-grade team used a scoring sheet to record individual scores from the IC map to determine support needed to strengthen implementation of the components of effective teaching of students' understanding of fractions.

5. Continue to give support.

Giving support to teachers implementing the change needs to be coupled with information gathered from multiple sources of data during regular checking of progress. Based on Joyce and Showers' research (2002), coaching is an imperative component to ensure transfer of learning to the classroom.

Strategy 5 in practice: The math coordinator, principal, and teacher leaders provided ongoing support to all teachers in multiple ways: with regular and frequent personal visits to each teacher to demonstrate their availability to provide support and assistance; by email; during professional learning community meetings; and via feedback following walk-throughs. The math coordinator recorded the scheduled times that fractions would be taught in the classrooms. The math coach worked with teachers individually as well as with the whole team.

6. Create an atmosphere and context for change.

Change will flourish in an environment where everyone is committed to learning, starting with educators first — developing their necessary knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions — and followed by students engaged in quality learning experiences by more effective teachers. This will require a school context, nurtured by school leaders, where educators consistently reflect on what is or is not working and use the information to assess the effectiveness in their learning and changes in practices to achieve the intended results for students.

Strategy 6 in practice: Teachers made a commitment to engage in their own learning about effective teaching of fractions, become risk-takers in trying new practices and being observed, and make changes based on constructive feedback from coaching.

FOCUS ON OUTCOMES FIRST

The 3rd-grade teachers' investment in focusing on outcomes first made significant and substantial differences in their efforts to achieve more effective instructional practices.

THINK 'E'

for ENGAGEMENT

**USE TECHNOLOGY TOOLS
TO DESIGN PERSONALIZED
PROFESSIONAL E-LEARNING**

By Shari Farris

As faculty chair of early childhood education at Vanguard University of Southern California, I was challenged each day by questions: How can I provide high-impact online professional learning to adult continuing education students? What barriers exist for adult learners seeking meaningful professional learning? How does my practice as a facilitator shift in an online learning environment?

I have experienced professional learning that was at times a mile wide and an inch deep on content, short on engagement, and often overcrowded with participants hoping to fulfill continuing education requirements in a three-hour workshop. I returned to my classroom with a binder full of ideas and strategies but little follow-up or opportunity to collaborate beyond the workshop session.

I have also experienced dynamic face-to-face professional learning that was engaging and relevant, sustained community, encouraged collabora-

tion, and had a positive impact on my practice. The greatest impact came from professional learning that challenged me to take my learning beyond the workshop and into my practice.

Those experiences, plus the work of Malcolm Knowles and Margery Ginsberg and research into the role of technology in adult learning, helped me understand that it is essential to provide that same type of engaging learning experience when considering professional development through e-learning.

UNDERSTAND THE LEARNERS

In 2011, I directed the launch of two new online degrees and a series of continuing professional education units for Vanguard University in the School for Graduate and Professional Studies. This program would be the first of its kind at Vanguard. I was experienced in professional development and adult learning, but e-learning was new to me. I was skeptical yet committed to providing high-quality and relevant continuing education courses.

The first group of students included practitioners in early childhood education serving in both public

and private settings. They ranged in age from 30 to 50 years old. Most had no experience with online courses or much experience with technology. I knew that the learning experiences in these courses needed to be meaningful, relevant to their practice, accessible, and engaging.

TIPS FOR DESIGNING ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Consider the following when designing online professional learning:

- Research how other providers of professional learning format and structure experiences using technology.

- Research learning management systems that will best meet learners' needs.

- Collaborate and share your ideas for professional learning using technology with other leaders, experts, and those with course design experience.

- Think about your goals and objectives for the learning experiences you are developing.

- Conduct a preliminary needs assessment for learners to assess content pedagogical knowledge as well as technological pedagogical knowledge.

- Carefully embed opportunities for true collaboration (Ingram, 2005).

- Establish online etiquette, protocols, and rubrics for discussions and feedback.

- Consider adult learning principles such as motivation, engagement, and trust (Knowles, 1984; Ginsberg, 2011) when designing online learning environments.

- Be flexible and willing to adjust as you proceed.

- Offer design choices to ensure that the learning experience translates into meaningful and transformative practice (Pappas, 2014).

Dorothy was one of the first students to enroll. She had no online course experience and limited experience using technology. She said she chose online professional learning because she wanted to improve her instructional practice and needed continuing education units while working full time in a public preschool. The online format was convenient, accessible and fit into her busy schedule.

She called me a few weeks before the course started and described her apprehension with using technology, fear of failure, and need for support and collaboration. I discovered in the technology preassessment process that many of the adult learners in the course shared her apprehension.

The technology preassessment assesses skill level, technology literacy, and anxiety about using technology. Questions in preassessments may include:

- How regularly are you able to log into a course or training?
- How familiar are you with using tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint?
- Are you comfortable with using computers?
- How much time each week are you available to participate in online discussions?

Information gathered from the preassessment can be used to provide support or additional tools and tutorials to help students get the most out of their learning experience without feeling anxious about using the technology.

These additional tools include online learning tutorials, calendars for time management, or checklists to help students keep track of steps to access materials and assignments. Students may also benefit from brief technical skills assessments such as how to use software, how to attach documents or use drop boxes, steps for accessing the library for support, or tips on creating a quiet study space.

PROVIDE A HIGH-TOUCH EXPERIENCE

I looked carefully at the courses I had designed with Dorothy in mind. Reflecting on my own experience participating in and facilitating traditional professional development, I sought to re-create those engaging and relevant learning experiences while using the technology tools available. Would this be enough for Dorothy and her peers?

One of the best tools for facilitators of online professional learning is the use of video. Facilitators can create short yet targeted videos (five to 10 minutes) for each session or new learn-

Information gathered from the preassessment can be used to provide support or additional tools and tutorials to help students get the most out of their learning experience without feeling anxious about using the technology.

ing concept. Videos allow adult learners to see that an educator is partnering with them and guiding their experience, even though that educator may be several hundred miles away.

Videos can be used to introduce course concepts, highlight specific pedagogy within the topic, and review learning objectives for each week. This targeted approach is a shift from the traditional workshop in that the facilitator is providing short and targeted information and asking open-ended questions that can be accessed when it is convenient for the learner and as many times as needed throughout the week. Dorothy said that she would often review the short videos from our class right before a lesson to refresh her understanding of the concepts.

It can be difficult to arrange synchronous time with students. VoiceThread is another option for engagement. VoiceThread allows the facilitator to attach voice lectures to slide shows, charts, photos, and videos, and allows students to attach a voice comment or question to the VoiceThread they are viewing. Students can create their own VoiceThread assignments and receive oral peer and facilitator feedback.

In addition to weekly short videos or VoiceThreads is the concept of high-touch instruction and facilitation. High-touch instruction is a personalized and accessible learning experience, establishing meaningful and intentional interactions between facilitator and learner as well as providing structures that promote sustained collaboration with peers. Weekly or daily discussions online allow students to practice concepts in the classroom and engage with peers later that same day about what worked well in the lesson and what still needs more practice.

This is a shift from some traditional professional development, where a three-hour session may have as many as 50 participants with limited access to the facilitator and brief, timed opportunities for table talk about practice.

In designing online learning, I begin by assessing how high touch my course will be and then how high tech the tools used in my course will be.

RETHINK COLLABORATION STRUCTURES

With user-friendly tools, carefully designed experiences, and supportive and sustained access, Dorothy settled easily into her first eight-week online continuing education course and was able to focus on her teaching practice and the course concepts.

Some of the best professional learning I have experienced

over the years was engaging and collaborative. Content-related table talk with other educators about teaching, learning, and assessment offered an opportunity to discuss relevant problems of practice. Writing about engagement in online learning, Albert L. Ingram states, "True collaboration is probably a fundamental part of building an effective community of practice or learning community" (Ingram, 2005, p. 55).

How does true collaboration shift when creating online learning communities? Margery Ginsberg's work on transformative professional learning through reflective group work (Ginsberg, 2011) guided my thoughts as I considered how reflective collaboration occurs in an online format. How can facilitators and designers of online learning for adults create a cooperative learning climate that adult learners require?

Using targeted learning outcomes, carefully crafted discussion prompts, and intentional grouping, the practice of true collaboration can easily translate into an online format. Paper, markers, and note cards used in a traditional workshop format to facilitate collaboration and promote thinking shift to tools such as discussion threads, chat rooms, and videos in an online format. Adult learners and facilitators can choose to have synchronous (real time) or asynchronous sessions, depending on their schedules.

For large classes, students can be grouped into smaller teams who teach and practice at the same grade level or even grouped across grade levels to enhance perspective. In many of the courses I design, students share videos of teaching practice with others in the course to receive rubric-guided feedback and promote reflection. A climate of trust develops as students practice giving feedback on lessons, challenge the concepts in the course through intentional questioning techniques, and have frequent celebrations as students share success with the concepts in their practice.

Learning is reciprocal in online formats as learners and facilitators build their knowledge base through shared experiences about teaching, learning, student achievement, and leadership practice. Feedback from students shows that this highly engaging approach was effective and transformative. Dorothy said that the online course encourages students and the facilitator to share experiences about teaching, classroom management, curriculum, and other challenges and successes in practice.

Other students said that the opportunity to engage with peers gave them a safe forum to share and give voice to their specific challenges with others who have similar experiences. They have time and space to receive and give advice to peers, go back to the classroom and change practice, then share successes. This level of sustained sharing and engagement does not always happen when time is short in traditional workshop format professional development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The insights I have gained providing online professional learning have challenged me to be more intentional regarding my choice of learning activities; more clear, concise, and explicit in my expectations, purpose, and directions for activities that impact practice; and more open to opportunities to provide choice and personalization when assessing learning.

Adult learners need choice and experiences that are meaningful and easily translate to their practice and build on their experiences as educators. I want students like Dorothy to pave their own path within the content area. My goal is to have these adult professionals see technology as a valuable tool to strengthen and transform their practice.

Much like traditional professional development, students in online learning are asked frequently to communicate what is relevant about their new learning. They are also asked what is missing from their learning at benchmarks throughout the course. I also ask students to give me feedback about the embedded technology tools. As a facilitator, I can adjust my course content and tools to meet students' needs. Student feedback enhances my practice and skill as a course facilitator.

LEARNER-CENTERED CONSIDERATIONS

Traditional professional development can shift to a more personalized experience in an online format. I was able to offer Dorothy personalized guidance as she completed each module of the course. She valued frequent contact with me throughout the course. She gained confidence in her ability to access and work with technology, participated in meaningful collaboration with her peers regarding teaching and learning, and practiced worthwhile reflection to improve her own teaching practice. Dorothy said that she developed important, collegial, and long-lasting relationships with peers who were also in the courses that she took.

My goal for Dorothy and other adult learners is for them to conclude their professional learning experience not only with the required continuing education units but also with an arsenal of tools that can transform practice and improve student achievement. I want them to have evidence that the time and resources that they invested to complete the courses had a significant impact on their practice while building their capacity to share their learning with others.

As a facilitator and instructor, I use forum discussions and online journaling for students to post questions or challenges regarding practice and course content and receive timely feedback and ideas from peers and/or facilitators. I follow up with students to see if they implemented changes in their classroom, using online journaling or mini portfolios as evidence of improved practice. The online journal serves not only as a formative assessment tool for benchmarking evidence

> **Using targeted learning outcomes, carefully crafted discussion prompts, and intentional grouping, the practice of true collaboration can easily translate into an online format.**

of improved practice but also is a valuable end-of-course artifact as I consider revisions to the course.

After taking several continuing education courses, Dorothy called to say, "Thank you for talking me off the ledge when I started this journey. I am much more confident not only about the concepts from the courses but also with using technology within my own learning and also with children to improve their learning."

I replied, "Thank you, Dorothy, for being willing to step out of your comfort zone and share your knowledge and experience with me and with your peers. Professional development is about growing in professional practice together to improve student achievement, and you made a significant contribution to that process."

If done well, providing continuing education in an online format to adult professionals like Dorothy has the potential to not only transform educational practice but also increase access to meaningful professional learning that is enhanced by relevant technology tools.

> **I use forum discussions and online journaling for students to post questions or challenges regarding practice and course content and receive timely feedback and ideas from peers and/or facilitators.**

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Activities vs. outcomes

They saw changes in their knowledge and skills and made changes to their practice, which resulted in increased student achievement as measured by growth on pre- and post tests.

Using a logic model as a road map to reach intended results, and collaboratively engaging in learning the six strategies for change, the 3rd-grade teachers were able to reach the desired goal by thinking about outcomes, not activities, first.

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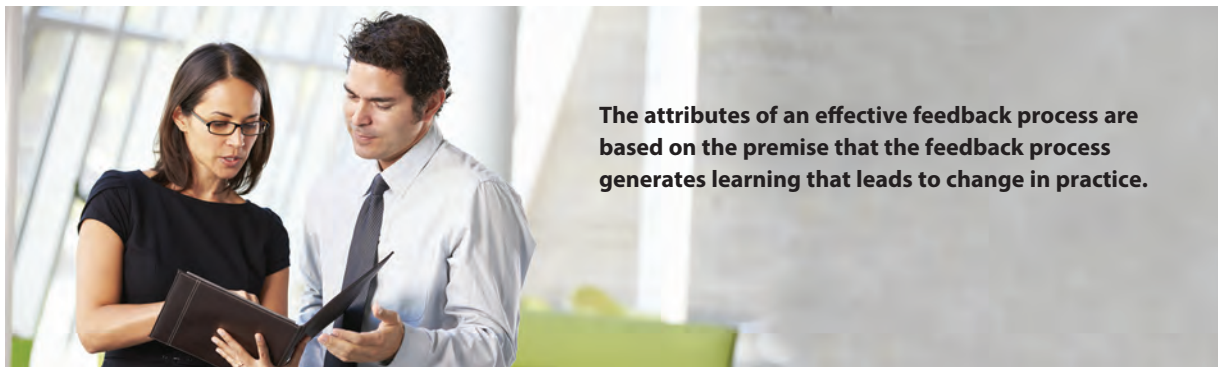
The attributes of an effective feedback process are based on the premise that the feedback process generates learning that leads to change in practice.

Attributes of an effective
FEEDBACK PROCESS

Not all feedback is created equal. Actually, it is quite uneven in its design and effectiveness. Feedback forms typically used by educators and the feedback process used to support learning have markedly different attributes. Understanding the key attributes of effective feedback is important for those involved in the feedback process.

The most typical forms of feedback are those that occur in a conversation between or among people. With a learner committed to continuous improvement, the feedback process occurs frequently, almost constantly, internally in the form of self-initiated reflection and analysis.

Whether the feedback process is externally or internally driven, the same attributes apply. The attributes of an effective feedback process are based on the premise that the feedback process generates learning that leads to change in practice. The process increases a learner's consciousness about her practice and the impact of those practices on others and the environment in which they occur.

By increasing awareness of the interactions among her own actions, those of others, and the environment, a learner gains the ability to assess whether her actions were effective, to consider alternative actions, and to plan for and refine future actions.

The tools on pp. 60-61 support learners and learning partners in applying the key attributes of the feedback process into their routine work. These tools are designed to help learners and learning partners determine their readiness for the feedback process and their engagement in it.

THE FEEDBACK PROCESS:
TRANSFORMING FEEDBACK
FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

By Joellen Killion

Joellen Killion draws on a deep research base to describe the concept of "learner-focused feedback." By shifting the focus from feedback-as-product to feedback-as-process, Killion changes how coaches, teachers, staff developers, and administrators engage with professional learning to improve practice.
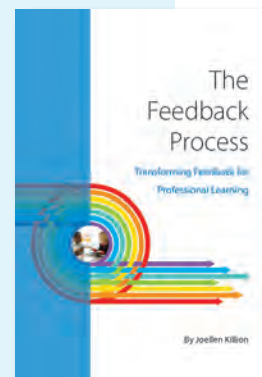
Multiple tools and templates, contextual examples, and end-of-chapter questions let learners reflect on new approaches to feedback.

Source: Killion, J. (2015). *The feedback process: Transforming feedback for professional learning.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

FEEDBACK PROCESS READINESS

As you prepare for the feedback process, ask yourself, "How am I addressing each key attribute?"
In the second column below, jot a note about how you plan to address each attribute to assess your readiness to enter the feedback process. For example, in response to "is criteria-based," you might note that you will have the performance standards and rubric available for reference.

Key attributes of effective feedback	How am I addressing this attribute?
Is a process	
Is criteria-based	
Integrates multiple forms and sources of data/evidence	
Is desired	
Is timely	
Is responsive to learner	
Is frequent	
Is future-focused	
Is reciprocal	
Employs skillful interaction	
Is multidimensional	

Source: Killion, J. (2015). *The feedback process: Transforming feedback for professional learning.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

POST-FEEDBACK PROCESS ASSESSMENT

As you reflect on the feedback process you participated in, ask yourself, "How did I attend to each attribute, and what might I want to do to strengthen how I integrate each into the feedback process?" In the second and third columns, record your responses. For example, in response to "is a process," you might rate your inclusion of this attribute a 2. In the third column, you might note that you want to shift from giving information to facilitating the construction of knowledge by talking less, listening more, and asking powerful questions.

Key attributes of effective feedback	How well did I attend to this attribute? Scale: 1 (not well) to 3 (well).	What do I want to do to strengthen my feedback process?
Is a process		
Is criteria-based		
Integrates multiple forms and sources of data/evidence		
Is desired		
Is timely		
Is responsive to learner		
Is frequent		
Is future-focused		
Is reciprocal		
Employs skillful interaction		
Is multidimensional		

Source: Killion, J. (2015). *The feedback process: Transforming feedback for professional learning.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

High-quality collaboration benefits teachers and students

WHAT THE STUDY SAYS

Using sophisticated statistical analyses, researchers examined individual teacher-level and school-level collaboration to understand the nature and effects of teacher-to-teacher collaboration in instructional teams. When teachers engage in high-quality collaboration that they perceive as extensive and helpful, there is both an individual and collective benefit. High-quality collaboration in general and about assessment in particular among teachers is associated with increases in their students' achievement, their performance, and their peers' students' achievement.

Study description

The research study examined teacher collaboration practices in 336 Miami-Dade Public Schools between 2010 and 2012 and involved over 9,000 teachers. Researchers used teacher surveys to collect descriptive data about teachers' collaboration practices. Through statistical analyses using district- and school-level data about

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At a glance

The quality of teacher collaboration positively influences teacher performance and student achievement.

THE STUDY

Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 52*(3), 475-514.

teacher characteristics, teacher value-added test results, school characteristics, and student achievement, researchers explored the interactions among multiple variables using multiple models to identify findings and explore appropriateness of alternative explanations.

Questions

The research study centers on two sets of questions. The first set, based on the descriptive study of the survey data, includes:

• What kinds of instructional collaborations exist in the urban school system studied?
• Do teachers perceive collaboration in certain instructional domains to be more extensive or helpful than others?
• How much variation in collaboration quality exists within and between schools?
• Is the quality of teacher collaboration associated with student achievement and teacher improvement with experience?

The second set of questions, based on the analytic study of the interaction among teachers, schools, and collaboration, addresses these questions:

• Do different kinds of schools have different kinds of instructional collaboration?
• Is the average quality of faculty collaboration associated with school achievement?
• Is a teacher's own collaboration quality or the average collaboration quality of her colleagues associated with her students' achievement?
• Do teachers improve at greater rates in schools with greater collaboration?

Methodology

Researchers employed two types of data: teacher survey data from a prior extensive survey about teacher collaboration and district and administrative data about teacher demographics, performance, role-specific indicators, experience, their student demographics, test scores, and school indicators.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Because many school and school system leaders and policymakers advocate and support teacher collaboration as a means to improve student achievement, this study is significant to understand more deeply how the nature and extent of collaboration, teacher characteristics, and school characteristics interact to affect student achievement. The results of this research study support the continuation of teacher collaboration that is focused, sustained, and perceived as helpful as a productive approach to increasing student success and teacher performance.

The study illuminates the importance of the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) within the practice of and conditions for teacher collaboration. The **Learning Communities** standard speaks to the impact of collective responsibility for student success, continuous improvement, and shared accountability. Sustained teacher collaboration about instructional strategies, curriculum, students, and assessment, as well as general collaboration is the primary vehicle for continuous improvement of teacher practice, for sharing accountability, and collective responsibility.

The **Leadership** standard addresses the role of leaders in advocating professional learning, creating support system and structures for continuous improvement, and developing capacity to lead and learn. Florida's standards for professional development specify that teachers are expected to participate actively in learning communities. Teacher collaboration requires leaders who are able to cultivate the capacity to collaborate about instruction, curriculum, students, and assessments, create and support instructional teams to maintain engagement in high-quality collaboration, and serve as an advocate of teacher collaboration.

While not specifically addressed in the study, it was evident that **Resources** such as time, staff, and materials were available for sustained teacher collaboration.

The **Data** standard addresses the use of educator, student, and system data to plan, monitor, and evaluate the impact of professional learning. The district invested in developing a data system that links educator and student data for multiple purposes.

Teacher collaboration is a powerful **Learning Design.** This standard emphasizes using active engagement, appropriate learning designs, and application of theories and research on learning. Teacher collaboration is grounded in the social interaction theory of learning and aligns with research on communities of practice, relevance to practice, and collective practice.

The **Implementation** standard stresses sustained support, constructive feedback, and application of change research. This study's focus on teacher collaboration over a two-year period and its examination of the nature and extent of teacher collaboration substantiate the role of teacher-to-teacher continuous learning.

The **Outcomes** standard emphasizes the alignment of teacher performance and student outcomes as the content focus of professional learning and strong coherence among what students learn, what teachers learn, and school and school system goals. In this study, teacher collaboration focused on teachers' core responsibilities — instruction, curriculum, assessment, and student success.

Teacher collaboration, when practiced with a focus on instructional strategies, curriculum, and assessment particularly, has benefits for both teachers and students. Results are even more promising when the collaboration is extensive and perceived by teachers as helpful. Collaboration among teachers even influences the results of teachers who do not experience directly the same high-quality collaboration. Researchers conclude, "Student achievement gains are greater in schools with stronger collaborative environments and in classrooms of teachers who are stronger collaborators" (p. 512).

REFERENCE

Learning Forward. (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning.* Oxford, OH: Author.

Teacher survey data were extracted from over 9,000 surveys for a larger study of school leaders over two years with a response rate of 36% and 39% in 2011 and 2012 respectively focusing on questions related to the extensiveness and helpfulness of different kinds of collaboration within their instructional teams. A considerably smaller number of teachers was included in the full analysis of reading (667) and math (544) achievement due to the amount of available value-added data.

Researchers used multiple models and analyses to examine and dispute alternative explanations for their findings.

Analysis

Through statistical analyses of the survey results, researchers determined the types, extent, and degree of helpfulness of teacher collaboration. Four types of collaboration were identified: general (e.g. classroom management) and three instruction-specific ones (instructional strategies and curriculum; students; and assessment). Quality of teacher collaboration is measured as teacher perception of the extent and helpfulness of collaboration.

Additional statistical analyses of the interactions among various teacher and school characteristics answered the research questions. Researchers employed multiple models to examine alternative explanations and to strengthen the potential for

making causal inferences about teacher collaboration and student achievement.

Results

Results of this study suggest that teacher collaboration has positive effects on teachers and their students. The majority of teachers surveyed (84%) indicated that they were a part of a team of colleagues that works together on instruction. Nearly all teachers (90%) report that their collaboration was helpful and the extent of their collaboration ranged from a mean score of 2.51 to 3.06 on a 4-point scale. Instruction-focused and assessment-focused collaboration were perceived as more helpful and extensive.

Collaboration about student work and classroom management was perceived to be less helpful and extensive.

School and teacher factors influence the quality and type of collaboration. Teachers in elementary schools, more so than in secondary schools, collaborated more frequently about instruction. Higher-quality collaboration is more common among female teachers than male teachers, particularly about instructional strategies, curriculum, and assessment.

In schools with more nongifted exceptional students, collaboration about instruction was weaker on average. Teachers in schools with larger enrollments had higher-quality collaboration about instruction and lower-quality collaboration about students. There were differences in the quality of collaboration among teachers of different races. Black, Hispanic, and white teachers, respectively, report decreasing collaboration quality.

Teachers with bachelor's degrees

as their highest degree collaborate more than teachers with other degrees. Teachers' years of experience was unrelated to most factors, although teachers with more than 15 years of experience reported significantly lower-quality collaboration about instructional strategies and curriculum. It is important to note that the study's design did not permit differentiating perceived quality from actual quality of collaboration.

All collaboration factors significantly and positively predict school-level math value-added, and general, instruction, assessment, and student collaboration had decreasing influence on school-level math value-added. All types of collaboration except about assessment significantly predicted school-level reading value-added. These results suggest, according to the researchers, that schools with "instructional teams engaged in better collaboration also have higher achievement gains in math and reading" (p. 500).

Similar results occur for teacher-level value-added in both math and reading. Teachers who participated in higher-quality collaboration had better achievement gains in math than those of teachers who experienced lower-quality collaboration. Additionally, not only were individual teachers able to increase math student achievement if they were engaged in better general collaboration and collaboration about assessment, but also if they worked in a school with better collaboration even if they did not participate in the same high-quality collaboration.

Teachers working in schools with better collaboration about students were better able to raise student math achievement. Teachers benefit from the quality of collaboration within their school even if they do not contribute to the collaboration themselves. In reading, collaboration about instructional strategies and curriculum was a positive predictor of value added.

Teachers' rate of improvement increases more rapidly if they work in a school with higher-quality collaboration than they would if they worked in a school with lower-quality collaboration. Teacher collaboration has strong and positive effects on student achievement, particularly when the collaboration is about assessment.

Limitations

The research team reports a number of limitations of the study. First, the study's measure of collaboration does not distinguish between the perceived and actual extent and helpfulness of collaboration as measured by self-report in the survey.

To measure if teachers working in schools with better collaboration improved at faster rates than peers working in schools with lower-quality collaboration, researchers held constant the value of school-level collaboration measured in 2011 was the same from 2010-2012. This may not have been true, yet it provided the opportunity to examine how collaboration influenced teacher growth over time, and simultaneously may not reflect actual conditions.

The study excluded teachers who perceived no value from collaboration in instructional teams. While the foci of this study was to understand the nature and effects of teacher collaboration, it would have been helpful to examine if teachers who perceived no value from collaboration had similar results if they worked with teachers who did engage in high-quality collaboration.

While the study's design does not permit causal inferences, researchers did apply additional statistical analyses to counter other potential factors affecting the relationships among teacher collaboration and student achievement. Doing so, while helpful to support the importance of their findings, may encourage readers to interpret the results as causal rather than correlational. ■

> **Teachers in elementary schools, more so than in secondary schools, collaborated more frequently about instruction.**

learning forward.org

Never send a human to do a machine's job

With all of the connected schools and classrooms, why has technology failed to transform education? A Learning Forward webinar addresses this question. Based on the Corwin publication, *Never Send a Human to Do a Machine's Job: Correcting the Top 5 EdTech Mistakes,* Yong Zhao presents a new vision for how technology can be effectively integrated to foster learner-centered schools. Zhao is an internationally known scholar, author, and speaker whose works focus on the implications of globalization and technology on education. Zhao will deliver the Wednesday morning keynote at Learning Forward's 2015 Annual Conference on Dec. 9. Webinars are free to Learning Forward members.

www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars/webinar-archive/never-send-a-human-to-do-a-machine-s-job

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SEIZING THE MOMENT:
State lessons for transforming professional learning

Explore this first look at lessons learned through Learning Forward's ongoing initiative to develop a comprehensive system of professional learning. This policy brief underscores the importance of a coordinated state professional learning strategy, the adoption of professional learning standards, the value of assessing the quality of professional development being used, and strategies for leveraging state leadership to drive improvements at the regional and district level. With an immediate focus on implementing Common Core State Standards and new assessments, the initiative provides resources and tools to assist states, districts, and schools in providing effective professional learning for current and future education reforms.

www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/seizing-the-moment.pdf

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Understanding the impact of professional learning

Q&A with Learning Forward Academy scholarship winners

Juliet Correll, a Learning Forward Academy graduate, reflects on her experience: "When I was a new graduate, I experienced a full range of emotions. I felt relief and delight about completing all assignments and graduating, a sense of clarity around my personal beliefs about professional learning, and a little melancholy about the end of such a rich journey. And, more than a little overwhelmed with all of the unattended action items jotted in the margins of my journal and, more formally, in my personal learning plan. Nearly three years later, some of those items are complete. Others have morphed and changed, and a few are left undone." Curious about how others have applied what they learned, she interviews other graduates. Read their insights in her blog post.

www.learningforward.org/publications/blog/learning-forward-blog/2015/08/28/understanding-the-impact-of-professional-learning-q-a-with-learning-forward-academy-scholarship-winners

How policy can strengthen the principalship

Learning Forward Deputy Executive Director Frederick Brown discusses the results of a study commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, **Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy,** *written by Paul Manna.*

"Manna's report addresses several questions, including: What can policymakers do to help ensure that schools have excellent principals and advance teaching and learning for their students? …

Frederick Brown

"Although this report was written with a focus on state policy, I would invite our provincial leaders in Canada to give it a look as well. Much of what Paul Manna has to say aligns in many ways with the Canadian Association of Principals report on the future of the principalship.

"I would also suggest that local district leaders reflect on Manna's findings, particularly his comments on how states and districts need to create systems and incentives to drive principals to engage in instructional leadership activities that are known to improve teaching and learning."

http://bit.ly/1Nze2Ui

@ learning forward

New staff members extend Learning Forward's reach

Learning Forward welcomes new staff members Michelle King and Laurie Calvert.

King is Learning Forward's associate director of communities. She coordinates Learning Forward's online communities of practice, supporting a network of districts committed to professional development redesign.

King joins Learning Forward through an agreement with Lewisville (Texas) Independent School District, where she was executive director of professional learning. King will continue to support the district's efforts to build cultural proficiency.

At Learning Forward, King will not only support and facilitate communities of practice but will also extend the organization's capacity to provide on-the-ground consulting to districts.

"Michelle's perspective as a district leader in professional learning is invaluable in her role at Learning Forward, as is her deep knowledge and skill in our field," said Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward's executive director. "We also know that Michelle's embrace of online networks and new technologies will be critical in ensuring we provide a learning environment that is both vibrant and grounded in surfacing solutions for district leaders," said Hirsh.

Calvert serves Learning Forward and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)

Michelle King

Laurie Calvert

as education policy advisor. In this full-time joint position, Calvert uses her education and communications expertise to develop research publications and coordinate policy and advocacy initiatives for both organizations.

Calvert worked most recently as teacher liaison for the U.S. Department of Education, where she spearheaded teacher leadership and outreach efforts. She coordinated much of the Teach to Lead initiative, conceptualized and wrote the *Teachers Edition* newsletter, and advised the department and the secretary on policy matters. She joined the department in the 2010-11 school year as a Washington Teaching Ambassador Fellow. Calvert is also a former middle school and high school teacher who holds national board certification.

"Laurie's unique experience and skill set will help both of our organizations prioritize the teacher leadership perspective as we work to achieve our specific missions in advancing educator effectiveness," said Hirsh.

Learning Forward and NCTAF are working together to advance national and regional policy and advocacy goals that address some of the most pressing issues facing American teachers. This strategic alliance is an opportunity for both organizations to have greater impact and achieve ambitious goals for educators and students alike.

book club

HAVING HARD CONVERSATIONS 2.0:
Extending the Learning
By Jennifer Abrams

This update of the author's original *Hard Conversations* book is designed to promote a deeper understanding of what needs to happen before, during, and after hard conversations. The author emphasizes the critical need for greater clarity around the goals and desired outcomes of hard conversations.

This version includes topics that weren't addressed in the first book, including filters of perception such as race and gender, the significance of organizational politics, productive responses, and effective listening strategies.

The book comes with an array of tools, templates, and checklists and a variety of vignettes and case studies based on Abrams' own practice.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, Learning Forward members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for $69 (for U.S. mailing addresses). To receive this book, add the Book Club to your membership before Dec. 15. For more information about this or any membership package, call **800-727-7288** or email **office@learningforward.org.**

Twists and turns on the road to where I am today

on board
DEBORAH JACKSON

People who know me realize how passionate I am about education, and that's been true for a long time. However, my pathway to where I am now hasn't been entirely predictable. At times, I have found myself at a crossroads where I had to make a choice. Every turn has led me to where I am today, even though I didn't exactly map it all out from the start. Here are a few of the more surprising moments in my life and how they got me to where I am.

When I went to college, I didn't prepare for a career in education. I loved history and politics and envisioned going to law school so I could champion a cause I believed in. As it turns out, education was my cause. Through my experience tutoring young people at church, I realized how much I loved teaching. When I had a pause in my professional career to give birth to my daughter, I took that time to get a teaching certificate — and I was off on a new path.

This love of teaching and the impact I could have kept me exhilarated. I couldn't imagine myself outside of a classroom. Then a former area superintendent planted a seed in my brain when he asked if I had ever considered a leadership position. I hadn't — until that moment. As that seed took root, I considered how my impact might spread, and I pursued an administrator endorsement.

With that qualification in hand, I was able to say yes when a principal offered me my first leadership position as an assistant principal. That position, and her high expectations, helped me understand a leader's responsibility for and impact on the learning of everyone in a school, from the new student to the veteran teacher to the engaged parent.

I began to realize how lucky I was as a teacher to have principals who believed that all teachers must learn continuously. We work hard at Learning Forward to instill this belief in all educators: Learning is continuous for all and an absolute for us in the field of education. I was fortunate that my supervisors and mentors lived that motto.

My journey through more progressive leadership positions allowed me to continue my passion for teaching. I strived to create supportive learning contexts for adults and refined my focus as an advocate for children who might not have other champions.

As principal of a progressive high school, I was settled and pleased with the impact I was having on my students and community. I was there for the long haul. Then came the opportunity to lead a team designing and implementing a new teacher and school-based administrator evaluation program. This led me to the central office, where I am a mentor/coach to other principals. And even though I couldn't have predicted where I'd be right now, it seems like the most natural role in the world.

While I did not plan the twists I've taken on my leadership pathway,

I do know this: I met the right people at the right times who helped me see something in myself, I was open to continuous learning, and I never lost my passion for education. I hope that, along the way, I've been that right person for someone else. ■

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Deborah Jackson is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

Grant funds principal professional learning

Learning Forward, in partnership with the Arizona Department of Education, is one of five recipients of nearly $2.5 million in the Principals Path to Leadership grant program, designed to expand effective principal preparation programs and share their best practices broadly to impact education reform.

Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh says that the $465,000 three-year grant from American Express and National Association of Secondary School Principals will allow the organization to expand its Learning Leaders for Learning Schools program for 80 principals and aspiring principals in the Greater Phoenix area and, later, scale up nationally.

"Research tells us that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction as a school-based influence on student achievement," Hirsh said. "The Leadership standard of the Standards for Professional Learning stresses that leaders make learning a top priority for themselves, other educators, and students. A focus on teaching and learning means they need knowledge and skills not only in curriculum, instruction, and assessment but also in effective adult learning. Our leadership program will help principals develop this knowledge as they learn how to develop systems of learning for the adults in their schools."

> The Learning Leaders for Learning Schools program will include seminars, small communities of practice, and personalized coaching. A multimedia field guide to be co-developed with participants will allow educators in other districts to scale up the practices.

The Learning Leaders for Learning Schools program will include seminars, small communities of practice, and personalized coaching. A multimedia field guide to be co-developed with participants will allow educators in other districts to scale up the practices.

The other four recipients of Principal Paths to Leadership grants are the Alabama State Department of Education, Arlington (Texas) Independent School District, New York City Leadership Academy, and North Carolina Principals & Assistant Principals' Association.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

Oct. 30:	Last day to donate artwork to ScholARTship 2015, a fundraiser supporting educator scholarships.
Nov. 2:	Webinar: Nonverbal Communication Skills to Positively Influence Classroom Behavior.
Nov. 10:	Webinar: PARCC Assessments: Get It Right Campaign.
Dec. 4-6:	Learning Forward Academy meets in Washington, D.C.
Dec. 5-9:	2015 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
Jan. 31, 2016:	Deadline to apply to present at Learning Forward's 2016 Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

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abstracts

Explore the many paths to leadership.
By Tracy Crow

The road to leadership isn't necessarily one that educators plan carefully with a series of logical steps. But no matter their role or their path, education leaders demand more from themselves and others and figure out how to make results happen.

Experience makes a great teacher:
NEW YORK CITY PROGRAM CONNECTS
VETERAN PRINCIPALS WITH NEW AND ASPIRING LEADERS.
By Sarosh Syed

In an effort to strengthen school leadership, New York City's Learning Partners Program matches veteran principals with two or more newer ones. Assistant principals and teacher leaders can participate as well, meaning the program can enhance the skills of current principals while grooming the next generation. *This article is sponsored by The Wallace Foundation.*

Turn effective practice into common practice:
SUCCESSFUL DISTRICTS CREATE SYSTEMS
OF LEADERSHIP TALENT DEVELOPMENT.
By Richard W. Lemons and Isobel Stevenson

Districts that are serious about developing leaders who can bring about change that leads to improved student learning will align professional support systems to how adults learn best, leveraging the energy of experience and power of reflection to help current and future leaders develop. Moreover, they will not leave these efforts to chance, regularly monitoring and constantly improving leadership development efforts.

Navigation aids:
9 SHIFTS IN PRACTICE SMOOTH THE TRANSITION
FROM SCHOOL TO CENTRAL OFFICE.
By Thomas M. Van Soelen and Debra Harden

A professional development program for superintendents provided a foundation for designing professional learning for district office leaders. Data collected from 12 superintendents who successfully transitioned from school to district office revealed nine shifts in practice that are critical for school and program leaders navigating their way to the central office.

Why teachers make good learning leaders.
By Brian Edwards and Jesse Hinueber

When teachers who deeply understand the needs of their students and colleagues lead professional learning in their schools, everyone benefits. Teacher leaders get to engage with their work in new ways. Their colleagues receive relevant, actionable professional learning. Principals leverage the

benefits of teacher collaboration in leading instruction at their schools. District officials see the pipeline of school and district leaders expand.

The drive to strive:
AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL REFLECTS
ON A CAREER BUILT ON CONSTANT LEARNING.
By Tameka Osabutey-Aguedje

Professional learning jump-started the early years of an assistant principal's career. Although she didn't aspire to leadership, the skills she developed made her a teacher leader on a mission. She came to realize that it is important to learn and grow rather than just try to survive on the job. She engaged in learning as a way to improve her professional practice and shared her message with others.

It's not just what you say:
VERBAL AND NONVERBAL SKILLS HELP LEADERS
ADDRESS CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVE OUTCOMES.
By Kendall Zoller, Antonia Issa Lahera,
and Anthony H. Normore

Real-life scenarios show how two school leaders used skills developed in a university school leadership program to create rapport, empathy, and trust while leading through challenging situations and achieving actionable outcomes. In each situation, the leaders used adaptive leadership, which guides leaders on how to shift cultures, and communicative intelligence, the cognitive and emotional thought processes that determine the elements of verbal and nonverbal communication.

Make the most of every day:
EXAMINE YOUR PRACTICE TO SIFT OUT TIME WASTERS.
By William Powell and Ochan Kusuma-Powell

High-quality schools are very busy organizations, and whenever there is a new development in the field of education that requires teacher attention, many teachers ask: Where will the time come from? It's not the quantity of time at our disposal that is at issue. It is how wisely we use what is available. Educators urgently need to examine their current practices to determine which may be inefficient, which may waste time, and which may actually be counterproductive.

What success really looks like:
BRIGHT SPOTS AND BLOTS
DEFINE A CAREER TRAJECTORY.
By Jennifer Abrams

An education consultant reflects on her career highs and lows as she shifts from her role as a high school English teacher to new teacher coach and professional learning facilitator and then on to author, consultant, and speaker.

features

Activities vs. outcomes:
The difference makes
all the difference.
*By Janice Bradley, Linda Munger,
and Shirley Hord*

In this second of two articles, 3rd-grade teachers in a professional learning community work collaboratively — enlisting the support of the principal and district math coordinator — to learn and implement six strategies that will increase their knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions to increase students' understanding of fractions.

Think 'e' for engagement:
Use technology tools to design personalized professional e-learning.
By Shari Farris

What can facilitators do to provide high-impact professional learning in an online environment? First, gain an understanding of students' skill level, technology literacy, and anxiety about using technology. Then use technology tools to re-create engaging and relevant professional learning experiences online. With user-friendly tools, carefully designed experiences, and supportive and sustained access, even the most inexperienced or fearful learners can transform their practice and, ultimately, improve student achievement.

Share your story

Learning Forward is eager to read manuscripts from educators at every level in every position. If your work includes a focus on effective professional learning, we want to hear your story.

JSD publishes a range of types of articles, including:

- First-person accounts of change efforts;
- Practitioner-focused articles about school- and district-level initiatives;
- Program descriptions and results from schools, districts, or external partners;
- How-tos from practitioners and thought leaders; and
- Protocols and tools with guidance on use and application.

To learn more about key topics and what reviewers look for in article submissions, visit **www.learningforward.com/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes.**

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

columns

Lessons from research:
High-quality collaboration benefits teachers and students.
By Joellen Killion

A study examining teacher collaboration practices in 336 Miami-Dade Public Schools shows that the quality of teacher collaboration positively influences teacher performance and student achievement.

From the director:
Effective leaders are always learning.
By Stephanie Hirsh

Successful leaders have a continuous learning mindset, make their learning visible, and create learning cultures in their schools, systems, and organizations.

Write for JSD

Effective leaders are always learning

A real turning point in my leadership pathway happened more than 30 years ago when I attended my first Learning Forward conference. I knew I had found my professional home. I was among people who were interested in understanding andragogy, change research, CBAM, and leadership practices in fields outside education.

I remember thinking that our district staff development program needed a bolder vision and could accomplish so much more for our students. I returned home a certified learning omnivore, never to return to the state of "I don't need to learn anything new."

I proposed to the superintendent's cabinet that we organize an advisory committee to develop a learning agenda for the school system. While they appeared accepting of my proposal, I often wondered if they secretly expected it to fail because of whom they assigned to it — seven principals who never volunteered for anything. They lived with the belief that "this too shall pass." In my experience, they weren't leaders who embraced change or undertook new challenges.

However, filled with my love of learning and certainty about what was right for our students, I was certain I would win them over. We began by

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Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@ learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward.

organizing our task and determining what we needed to learn to successfully achieve our goals. Everyone assumed responsibility for developing expertise in one or more areas. Over the course of 16 weeks, we developed the district's first leadership plan.

Imagine the surprise of the superintendent's cabinet when it was time to present the recommendations. Though I wouldn't have anticipated the outcome when we started out, a team of committed and enthusiastic leaders presented the plan. The cabinet approved our plan, by and large, and the district ultimately implemented what we recommended.

That experience solidified for me the importance of investing as much energy into the learning of leaders as we had for our teachers.

Over the years, I have spoken and written many times about the importance of being a learning leader. As I continue to learn, I refine my views on what it means to be a learning leader. I offer three personal views that influence my work today.

Effective leaders succeed because they are always learning. There is no profession in which a leader can rest on what he or she already knows about the field. Students and educators alike will always have new needs and enter workplaces with new challenges. Advances through research and technology transform how professionals can best fulfill their commitments.
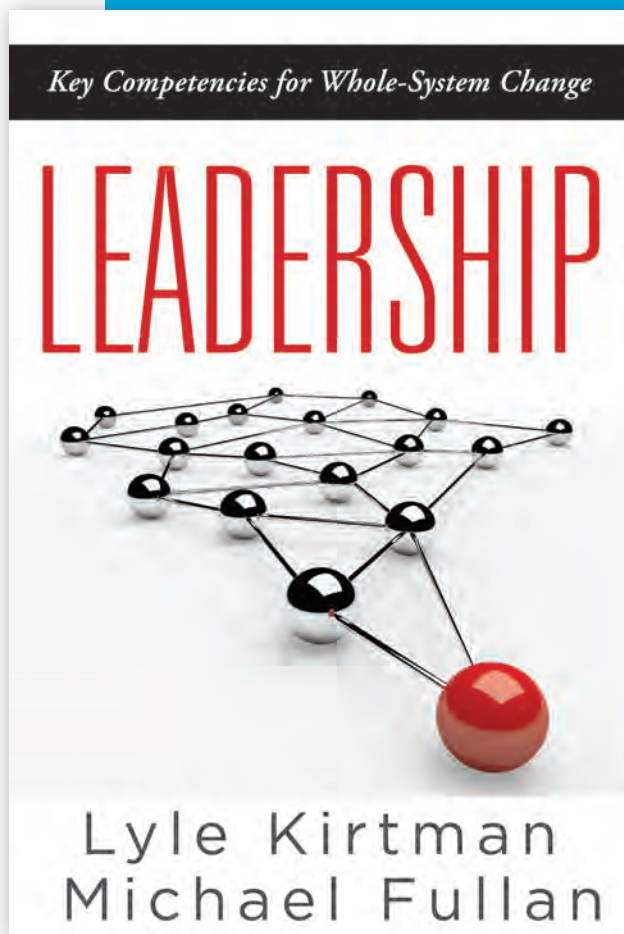
Without a continuous learning mindset, leaders won't be able to keep up.

Great leaders model their commitment to their own learning. Leaders make their learning visible, and they learn in collaboration with those in like roles and with their staff members and teams. The people around them aren't told but rather witness learning as a professional priority.

Successful leaders create learning cultures in their schools, systems, and organizations. Learning every day is an expectation in a learning culture, and leaders prioritize resources to ensure that every professional has what he or she needs to learn continuously.

What views do you hold about learning leaders? How do you live them each day as a leader? Your input will help me to refine these views going forward. I look forward to learning with you. ■