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NSDC Lauds Introduction of Landmark Bill That Would Transform Teacher Learning

Bill Would Overhaul Definition of Professional Development to Ensure Focus on Continuous Improvement

DALLAS—May 11, 2010—The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the nation's largest organization dedicated solely to improving our schools through quality and continuous professional learning applauds the introduction of a bill that would modernize and strengthen professional development across the country.

The Great Teachers for Great Schools Act — introduced by Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) and supported by more than a half-dozen other members of Congress — would ensure all teachers, principals, and other school staff have access to high-quality and effective professional development to improve student achievement.

“The evidence is abundantly clear — the most powerful way to improve teaching and learning at grand scale is through effective professional learning,” said Stephanie Hirsh, NSDC executive director.

“NSDC applauds Congressman Polis and his colleagues for recognizing quality professional development must directly address student learning needs, be led by instructional leaders and teachers, and be constantly evaluated for its impact on student achievement,” Hirsh added.

With the U.S. education system continuing to lag behind global counterparts and U.S. teachers receiving a fraction — only about 15 percent, on average — of professional development support compared to teachers in other nations, the urgent need for the bill is clear.

The bill will amend the Department of Education's definition of professional development to reflect best practices and support the professional development teachers need to succeed. It will also make a targeted investment in disadvantaged and poor-performing school districts to raise teacher and student performance where improvements are needed most.

“Schools and districts that approach professional development as a daily cycle of continuous improvement are achieving measurable results for teachers and their students. This approach to professional learning promotes collaborative learning and problem solving as well as shared responsibility for meeting the needs of all students,” Hirsh said.

“I urge all members of Congress to cosponsor and support the Great Teachers for Great Schools Act to demonstrate your commitment to provide educators with the support they need most to ensure all students achieve,” she added.

About National Staff Development Council

The National Staff Development Council's purpose is ensuring that every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves. For more than 40 years, NSDC has focused on increasing student achievement through more effective professional development. To learn more about the impact of high-quality professional learning, visit www.nsd.org.

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