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Since 2002, the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation has annually awarded the Broad Prize to urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among income and ethnic groups.

The web site for the Broad Prize offers tools and data to support learning for any district leader. Investigate in particular the best practice videos and tools offered online. And become inspired by the learning leaders recognized for making a difference.

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Functions of the new central office administrator

<b>Visionary</b>	Assist in the development and implementation of an organization-wide vision and mission.
<b>Planner</b>	Support the district or schools in systematic planning to determine their mission and goals.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Facilitate change and all the interactions that surround it.
<b>Boundary spanner</b>	Build linkages across institutional boundaries.
<b>Communicator</b>	Communicate effectively in a variety of ways.
<b>Dispute resolver</b>	Resolve and mediate rather than suppress conflict and disputes.
<b>Efficiency enhancer</b>	Enhance the efficiency of the organization.
<b>Coordinator</b>	Coordinate efforts of different levels of the organization.
<b>Standard setter</b>	Define standards for which different units of the district will be responsible.

“When central offices participate productively in teaching and learning improvement, everyone in the central office orients their work in meaningful ways toward supporting the development of schools’ capacity for high-quality teaching and expanding students’ opportunities to learn.”

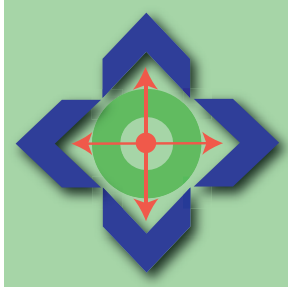
**Quotable**

*Source: Central office transformation for district-wide teaching and learning improvement. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2010.*

*Source: “Will our phones go dead? The changing role of the central office.” Issues about Change, 2(4), SEDL, 1993.*

# The role of the central office in a learning school

A decade ago, professional development experts began to describe a necessary shift that school systems would be required to make to guarantee powerful, effective professional development for their teachers, the kind of professional development that leads to improved student learning. With this shift, central office staff have a new role —



to build the capacity of school-level personnel to design, manage, and implement improvement efforts.

When professional development moves from a centralized district to a school-based function, central

administrators' work actually increases. The nature of the work changes — from determining content and delivering the learning to building school staffs' capacity to make sound decisions about their own professional development.

Central office staff members — those who work in school district offices with responsibility for curriculum, instruction, professional development, mentoring, teacher quality, and student success — have seven major tasks in a system that views the school as the primary center of learning. They are:

1. Build the capacity of school staff to make sound decisions about professional development;
2. Provide research and models of best practices regarding professional development;
3. Allocate resources to schools to support school learning plans;
4. Coordinate efforts between and among schools;
5. Coordinate the formation of cross-school collaborative professional learning teams;
6. Support collaborative professional learning teams;
7. Monitor implementation throughout the district.

**Source:** *Becoming a learning school*. NSDC, 2009. Available at [www.nsdstore.org](http://www.nsdstore.org).

Download the guide at [www.nsd.org/news/jsd/](http://www.nsd.org/news/jsd/)

With each issue of *JSD*, NSDC publishes an online companion to the magazine to facilitate the use of *JSD* articles with school faculties, teams, district staff, or other groups of education stakeholders.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Assess your perception of your district's current practices and consider how the perspective of the authors in this issue might differ or offer insights to transforming practice.

1. Central office staff provide resources for school-based, collaborative professional learning.

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2. The district comprehensive professional development plan designates schools' use of collaborative professional learning.

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3. Central office staff share knowledge, research, and best practices about professional learning broadly and widely throughout the district with principals and teachers.

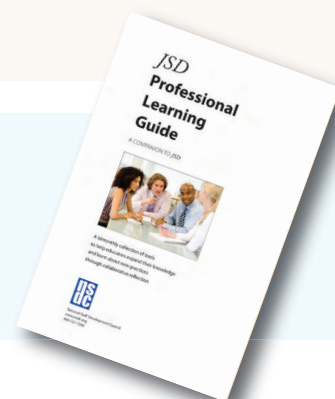
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4. Central office staff tailor district-provided professional development to support the goals included in schools' professional development plans.

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5. Central office staff understand how they support schools in the area of professional learning.

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Use *JSD* as a professional learning resource