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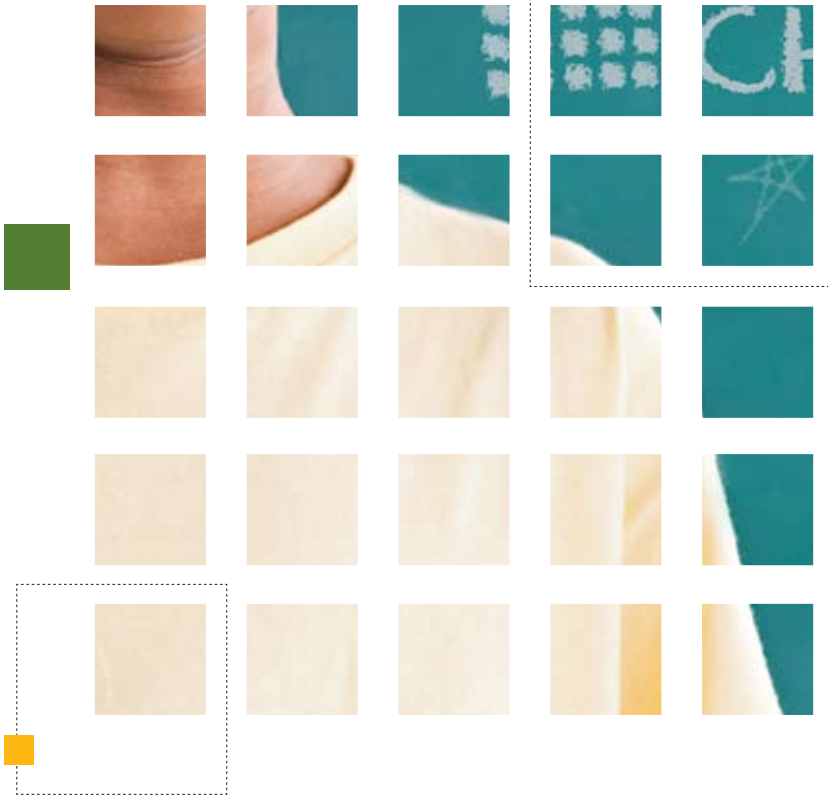

The Learning Compact Redefined: A Call to Action

A REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE WHOLE CHILD


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THE WHOLE CHILD

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1703 N. Beauregard St. ▪ Alexandria, VA 22311-1714 USA
Telephone: 1.800.933.2723 or 1.703.578.9600 ▪ Fax: 1.703.575.5400
Web site: www.ascd.org ▪ E-mail: member@ascd.org

Gene R. Carter, *Executive Director*; Michelle Terry, *Deputy Executive Director, Program Development*; Judy Seltz, *Deputy Executive Director, Constituent Partnerships*; Nancy Modrak, *Director of Publishing*; Mary Beth Nielsen, *Manager of Editorial Services*; Gary Bloom, *Director, Design and Production Services*; Reece Quiñones, *Senior Designer*; Vivian Coss, *Production Coordinator*

ASCD is a community of educators, advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. Founded in 1943, ASCD is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, international education association with headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia.

A copy of this report is available online at www.ascd.org/learningcompact.

A LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION COCHAIRS

STEPHANIE PACE MARSHALL AND HUGH B. PRICE

No matter how purposeful and well-grounded, the recommendations advanced by a commission seldom lead to meaningful differences in the lives of children, their schools, and their communities. There are no guarantees, of course, that this report will be any different than others that have been released with a flurry of hope and attention. Yet we hope this report will leave an indelible imprint on education philosophy and practice, for several reasons:

1. This report frames education within the most fundamental context—the personalized engagement and nurturing of the whole child.
2. It describes how the focus on one-size-fits-all education has marginalized the uniqueness of our children and eroded their capacity to learn in whole, healthy, creative, and connected ways.
3. It offers a new learning compact with our children—one that rightly puts the children and their learning needs within the center of every educational program and resource decision.

What's more, this report arrives at the peak of the debate over "standards-based education." Although there have been some gains in student achievement, the pace of progress is far too slow. Vast numbers of low-income and minority youngsters, in particular, continue to languish below grade level. We believe achievement will increase when the whole child is invited and able to learn.

This report provides the impetus for educators, policymakers, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders to change the conversation about learning and schooling from reforming its structures to transforming its conditions so that each child can develop his strengths and restore his unique capacities for intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual learning.

When we commit to educating whole children within the context of whole communities and whole schools, we commit to designing learning environments that weave together the threads that connect not only math, science, the arts, and humanities, but also mind, heart, body, and spirit—connections that tend to be fragmented in our current approach.

If the whole child were truly at the center of each educational decision, as ASCD Executive Director Gene Carter posits (see p. 4), we would create learning conditions that enable all children to develop all of their gifts and realize their fullest potential. We would enable children to reconnect to their communities and their own diverse learning resources, and we would deeply engage each child in learning. Finally, if the child were at the center, we would integrate all the ways children come to know the natural world, themselves, and one another, so that they can authentically take their place in creating a better future for all.

It is time that the United States begin a new conversation about K–12 education by asking, "What is possible now?" It is our conviction that given what we now know about learning and development, we can do better and we can do more. And when we can do more, then we *should* do more.

ASCD'S POSITION ON

THE WHOLE CHILD

Current educational practice and policy focus overwhelmingly on academic achievement. This achievement, however, is but one element of student learning and development and only a part of any complete system of educational accountability.

Together, these elements support the development of a child who is healthy, knowledgeable, motivated, and engaged.

To develop the whole child requires that

COMMUNITIES PROVIDE

- Family support and involvement.
- Government, civic, and business support and resources.
- Volunteers and advocates.
- Support for their districts' coordinated school health councils or other collaborative structures.

SCHOOLS PROVIDE

- Challenging and engaging curriculum.
- Adequate professional development with collaborative planning time embedded within the school day.
- A safe, healthy, orderly, and trusting environment.
- High-quality teachers and administrators.
- A climate that supports strong relationships between adults and students.
- Support for coordinated school health councils or other collaborative structures that are active in the school.

TEACHERS PROVIDE

- Evidence-based assessment and instructional practices.
- Rich content and an engaging learning climate.
- Student and family connectedness.
- Effective classroom management.
- Modeling of healthy behaviors.

FOREWORD

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) convened the Commission on the Whole Child in January and July 2006. Composed of leading thinkers, researchers, and practitioners from a wide variety of sectors, the Commission was charged with recasting the definition of a successful learner from one whose achievement is measured solely by academic tests, to one who is knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling.

"ASCD convened the Commission on the Whole Child because we believe that the success of each learner can only be achieved through a whole child approach to learning and teaching," said ASCD Executive Director Gene R. Carter. "If decisions about education policy and practice started by asking what works for the child, how would resources—time, space, and human—be arrayed to ensure each child's success? If the student were truly at the center of the system, what could we achieve?"

The Commission is pleased to acknowledge contributions to its thinking by Harold "Bud" Hodgkinson, Eric Schaps, Amy Berg, and Martin Blank. Their reports were designed to help the Commission address its charge by providing a compelling overview of the complexity and challenges of education in the United States.

The Commission thanks the many individuals who offered suggestions for this report; this report is that of the Commission as a whole.

Each moment we live never was before and will never be again.

And yet what we teach children in school is 2 + 2 = 4 and Paris is the capital of France.

What we should be teaching them is what they are.

We should be saying: "Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed, there has never been another child exactly like you. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel."

—Pablo Casals

Participatory democracy hinges on a social compact between adults and children that we shall together prepare them for a brighter future. For too long we have maintained a status quo in education that has at best prepared children for our past and at worst marginalized those families least able to access a better life for their children through means other than education. We have been committed to time structures, coursework, instructional methods, and assessments that do not reveal to our children the marvel that they are and, instead, often leave them questioning their worth and the purpose of education designed more than a century ago. It is time to put the students at the center of the education system and align resources to their multiple needs to ensure a balanced education for all.

We live and work in an era in which it has become a truism to say that the only constant is change. We also know that change solely for the sake of change rarely yields lasting improvement. And we know that the public is tired of education reforms that promise more than they deliver. Fully aware of the risks of proposing yet another change to how this nation approaches educating our young people,

we nevertheless challenge those responsible for learning and teaching to reshape education so young people learn not only that 2 + 2 = 4, but also "who they are" and why each person is "a marvel."

Our current, well-intentioned focus on academics is essential. Global economics require that each citizen be prepared to live in and contribute to a worldwide community of shrinking size and growing complexity.

> There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.
>
> —*Nelson Mandela*

If, however, we concentrate solely on academics and on narrowly measured academic achievement, we fail to educate the whole child. We shortchange our young people and limit their future if we do not create places of learning that encourage and celebrate every aspect of each student's capacity for learning. We can do more, and we can do better.

Schools cannot repair this broken compact alone. Communities also must commit to preparing our children for a future we will not see. Schools, districts, communities, and policymakers must recognize that academic achievement as measured through current education policy is both necessary and insufficient to prepare our young people for their future. We must not be limited by our past as we prepare this and future generations for a future beyond our imagining.

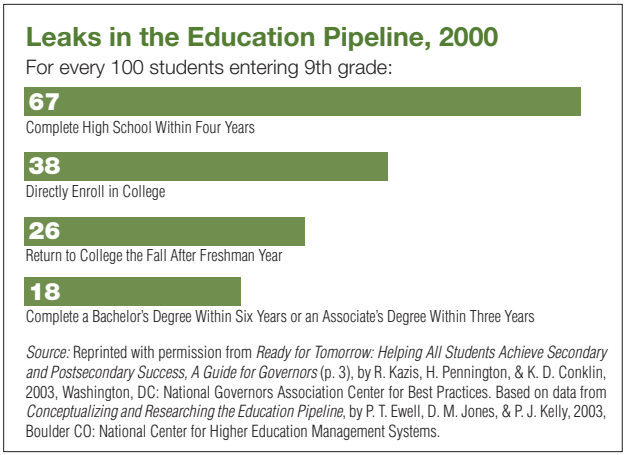
Children are the living message we send to a time we will not see.

—John W. Whitehead

The world in which we educate young people today is not the same as it was even yesterday, and the future stretches our imagination. Today's teachers have seen the end of the Industrial Age, lived through the Information Age, and are moving into what Daniel Pink calls the Conceptual Age. We live in a global economy increasingly driven by consumer demand for customization and technology that facilitates both competition and collaboration across hemispheres and time zones. Today's students must be prepared unlike any generation before to think critically and analytically while acting with innovation and creativity.

Children entering school today will engage in careers that have not yet been invented but will become obsolete within their lifetime. Teamwork and shared decision making will be required to resolve complex problems in the workplace and community. Perhaps anticipating those changes, businesses as varied as service industries and professional organizations are already seeking out individuals with strong "communication skills, honesty and integrity, interpersonal skills, motivation and initiative, a strong work ethic, and teamwork skills, in that order" (Rothstein, 2004, p. 15).

Today's schools are filled with young people who in previous generations could have dropped out for jobs in industry and agriculture. No such cushion exists today. Over a lifetime, workers with a high school degree will outearn those who do not graduate by more than half a million dollars, and those with a bachelor's degree will outearn high school graduates by more than a million dollars.



It's not just the work prospects of students that have changed. Our nation's students are as diverse a group as we have ever seen. Nearly 40 percent of students in public schools are minority, a number that increases dramatically in the South and West and is expected to increase to nearly 50 percent nationwide by the year 2020. One of every five students is Hispanic; one in seven is black; and one in five speaks a language other than English at home. Students from high-poverty homes and communities attend schools that spend less per student, employ higher proportions of inexperienced or unqualified teachers, and are in greatest need of physical renovation (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Poor and minority populations have historically been ill served by traditional schooling. The pattern of increasing diversity in school populations is repeated around the globe.

The initial—and even reasonable—response to the changed demands on education was to raise expectations and to test more frequently. U.S. policymakers, for example, reasoned that the best way to ensure all students were successful was to test achievement annually and to first offer resources, and then apply sanctions to those schools deemed unsuccessful. The narrow focus on a specific score and content area had the unintended consequence of taking the focus away from the whole child—and from some children altogether (Laitsch, Lewallen, & McCloskey, 2005). To make more time for the subjects tested for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), "seventy-one percent of school districts . . . reduced elementary school instructional time in at least one other subject" (Center on Education Policy, 2006, p. vii). In districts where more than 75 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, that number rose to 97 percent. Subjects cut included social studies (33 percent), science (29 percent), art and music (22 percent), and physical education (14 percent).

We do not argue for a diminished focus on academics. We do call for increased attention to the conditions that evidence makes clear are essential to learning. We know that students are more successful when they experience a broad, challenging, and engaging curriculum; when they feel connected to their school and broader community; when they are healthy physically and emotionally; and when schools are safe and trusting places. The School Development Program cites multiple studies from the United States and other nations connecting students' sense of community with achievement (California Department of Education, 2005).

We call on communities—educators, parents, businesses, health and social service providers, arts professionals, recreation leaders, and policymakers at all levels—to forge a new compact with our young people to ensure their whole and healthy development. We ask communities to redefine learning to focus on the whole person. We ask schools and communities to lay aside perennial battles for resources and instead align those resources in support of the whole child. Policy, practice, and resources must be aligned to support not only academic learning for each child, but also the experiences that encourage development of a whole child—one who is knowledgeable, healthy, motivated, and engaged.

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

THE NEW COMPACT

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.

Each graduate is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

To the doctor, the child is a typhoid patient; to the playground supervisor, a first baseman; to the teacher, a learner of arithmetic. At times, he may be different things to each of these specialists, but too rarely is he a whole child to any of them.

—From the 1930 report of the White House Conference on Children and Youth

The prevailing question is not about what children need to succeed. The research is clear. They need supportive environments that nurture their social, emotional, physical, ethical, civic, creative, and cognitive development. The question becomes: Who bears responsibility for creating this environment? The answer is: The whole community.

Community members must become partners with educators. They need to become resources for learning that allow schools to become powerful agents for change in the lives of their students and families rather than just portfolios of programs and services (Blank & Berg, 2006). Educators bear a responsibility to welcome community members as genuine partners, using their talents and resources to offer students real-life learning and support.

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES . . . TOGETHER

Over the last few decades, we have learned a great deal about child development and its relationship to successful learning. Scientists have

A WHOLE CHILD IS . . .

- intellectually active
- physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent
- empathetic, kind, caring, and fair
- creative and curious
- disciplined, self-directed, and goal oriented
- free
- a critical thinker
- confident
- cared for and valued

shown us how nature and nurture, in concert, shape a child's early and continuing development—the importance of both working together is no longer in question. We know that children do not develop and learn in isolation, but rather grow physically, socially, emotionally, ethically, expressively, and intellectually within networks of families, schools, neighborhoods, communities, and our larger society. Educating the whole child cannot happen if emphasis is placed solely on academic achievement.

When the Educational Testing Service examined factors that affect the achievement gap (Barton, 2003), it found 14 factors that correlated with achievement gaps between white and minority students. Of those, more than half (8 of 14) were out-of-school factors, such as birth weight, hunger and nutrition, television watching, and family mobility. The connection between in-school success and out-of-school context is strong and argues for schools and communities working together to put young people at the center of their decision making.

A whole child develops through experiences. One need only watch an adolescent in a social situation a short time to see the wheels moving as he considers how his actions will be interpreted by the others, what consequences might exist for a given choice, and what his role in the group is now and could be later. He uses his prior knowledge to respond to the new situation, considers the level of risk with any behavior, and interprets body language and tone before jumping in. Later, he is likely to reflect on the experience in some detail to his friends while telling his parents that nothing interesting happened that day.

So, too, does a young child learn through exploration and observation. While she may think she knows that checkers are nonliving and bean sprouts are living, observing their growth (or nongrowth) when they are planted in dirt confirms her suspicions with real evidence. Just as no athlete learned to play by reading a book, or musician learned to compose by hearing a story of a composer, children of all ages must have broad-based experiences to develop both the skills and knowledge that prepare them for a successful future.

Of course, all of us learn within a social context surrounded by family members, friends, classmates, teachers, and others with whom we interact regularly. Learning takes place every day, not only in schools but also in communities and homes, and it is significantly influenced by the presence of adults who help young people interpret and respond to what is happening. When the expectations of a young child's social network mesh with those of the school, that child is likely to feel prepared and successful. However, students whose families are marginalized from mainstream society—whether through economic, social, or cultural differences—often face confusion, failure, and further marginalization at school. These young people bring knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are meaningful within their social networks, yet may not be seen as conducive to learning—and that may even be considered disruptive and inappropriate.

Only whole learning communities and whole adults can nurture and support the development of whole children. Schools that educate the whole child must be learning organizations, places where

student voices are heard and respected and where learning is challenging, relevant, and relationship-driven.

> Institutions that support the whole child . . . must be both very structured and very free. There must be a sense of consistency and mindfulness in every detail of the space, from the schedule to . . . the tone of personal interactions to the system of expectations. . . . But there must also be flexibility and looseness, the possibility for creativity and spontaneity.
>
> —*Kate Quarfordt, Director, Artistic Program, Bronx Preparatory School*

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: From *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd ed., by A. H. Maslow, 1970, New York: Harper & Row.

For schools and communities to support the whole child, they must meet basic needs of safety and security before they can address more complex activities. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides an order through which both schools and communities can consider their policies and practices.

When students' basic physiological and psychological needs (safety, belonging, autonomy, and competence) are satisfied, they are more likely to

- Become engaged in school.
- Act in accord with school goals and values.
- Develop social skills and understanding.
- Contribute to the school and community.
- Achieve academically.

Further, when schools fail to meet those needs, students are more likely to become less motivated, more alienated, and poorer academic performers (California Department of Education, 2005). Consequently, schools and communities must work together to ensure that young people's needs are met not just at the higher levels of knowledge and achievement, but at the most fundamental levels of health, safety, and belonging.

PROMOTING PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

> Imagine that it's the first day of the new school year. Picture the students as they approach their school that morning. Zero in on them as they walk toward the front doors and try to imagine what they are thinking and feeling.
>
> Are they thinking, "Boy, I can't wait to pick up where we left off in history class last June to

find out what happened after the Revolutionary War"? Or, "Now that I've mastered long division, I hope I get lots of chances to use it"? Or, "I know I can do better on the SAT-9 this year if I just buckle down"?

Probably not. More likely they're wondering, "Will I have friends this year? Will I know anyone in my class? Will my teachers like me? Will they care enough to try to help me? Will I be able to do the work? What if I can't?" And sadly, in more places than anyone would like, students may be worrying, "Will I be safe here? Will I be picked on or threatened or beaten up or ripped off?"

—From Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools, Learning First Alliance, 2001, p. vi

A California Department of Education report (2005) summarizes much of the research related to student health and academic success, citing direct links between physical health and academic progress:

- Students have better grades and attendance when their health needs are met.
- Investing in children's physical health needs promotes learning over the school years and has profound effects on school readiness and early learning.
- Increases in physical education time concomitant with reductions in academic instruction time have favorable effects on students' academic achievement.
- Schools with available health services promote student achievement through lower absenteeism and dropout rates as well as improved gains in and student attitudes about learning.
- Substance abuse, lack of breakfast, the availability of illicit drugs on school property, and a perceived lack of safety at school have particularly strong relationships to students' poorer school performance.

Communities worldwide have adopted a whole child–whole community approach. The Model Schools for Inner Cities Initiative in Toronto makes the school the hub of the community for education and community health. At the Yukon's Whitehorse Elementary, an innovative community partnership focuses on removing barriers to learning that stand outside the school walls. The United Kingdom's Priory Lane Junior School—designated as "outstanding" by Ofsted, the official inspectorate for children and learning in England—emphasizes both high expectations and developing social and emotional competency.

■ ■ ■

In the United States, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) includes in its state learning standards performance indicators in the traditional academic areas assessed through the No Child Left Behind Act, and adds to those indicators for physical development and health, foreign language, fine arts, social and emotional learning, and measurements of the educational environment of each school.

The Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC), an interactive Web site created at the Northern Illinois University and funded by the ISBE, provides visitors with the accountability measures defined in the Illinois State Learning Standards, which include social and emotional learning. ISBE's Social and Emotional Learning goals, standards, and benchmarks were developed by a broad-based group of educators, human services professionals, and parents and correlate with Illinois Learning

Standards. Performance descriptors offer learning targets with greater detail.

PROVIDING A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

Schools and communities committed to educating the whole child work together to ensure the physical and emotional safety and security of each child. They engage students in character education, peer mediation, conflict resolution, and other similar programs to both ensure their safety in school and develop the skills, attitudes, and behaviors they will need to remain safe.

Every school has students who feel invisible, alienated, and alone. The extent to which schools and communities are willing to face that reality together determines the real safety of the learning environment. "With every interaction in a school, we are either building community or destroying it," says James Comer, founder of the School Development Program and Whole Child Commission member. In many cases the challenge of building whole communities necessitates difficult dialogue and a willingness to confront our deepest differences. As schools and communities commit to teaching young people the skills to think critically and engage in thoughtful debate, we adults must also have the courage to seek solutions rather than blame.

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a collaborative, cross-national study conducted on a four-year cycle that compares students around the world to "gain insight into, and increase understanding of, adolescent health behaviors, health, and lifestyles in their social context" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003, p. 12). Among its most recent findings:

- Overall, U.S. youth are no more likely to be involved in bullying others at school than students in many other European countries and Canada. However, U.S. students are among the higher ranking countries for frequent bullying.
- Only 38 percent of U.S. students always feel safe at school and 30 percent rarely or never feel safe.
- U.S. students are among the least likely to believe that their classmates are kind and helpful (only 39 percent of girls and 35 percent of boys), followed only by Lithuania and the Czech Republic. By comparison, 89 percent of girls and 90 percent of boys in Portugal, 65 percent of girls and 61 percent of boys in Israel, and 51 percent of girls and 44 percent of boys in Canada agree that their classmates are kind and helpful.

Such research has led to the development of many character education and school discipline programs. Research on programs emphasizing schoolwide conflict resolution, peer mediation, and direct teaching of social skills and self-management strategies has shown positive effects (Learning First Alliance, 2001).

■ ■ ■

Price Laboratory School in Cedar Falls, Iowa, developed a Buddy Circles program to partner 4th grade students with their peers from

a school for children with physical and mental disabilities. In a society where the term "retard" is used so often in a joking or put-down way, they wanted to take this opportunity to discover the many abilities people with disabilities have, learn to respect ways that people are similar and different, and reflect on the importance of friendship for all kids.

Post-project survey data shows they did just that:

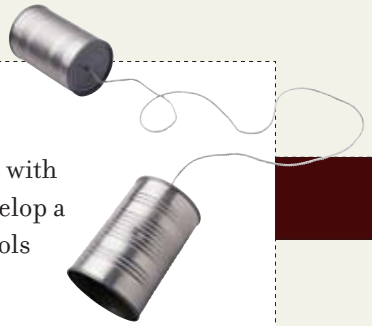
- *"I learned that even if you have disabilities everyone has emotions and you can still get hurt by other people."*
- *"It was like being with one of my friends except he couldn't talk as much and I had to push his wheelchair." (Struck, 2006)*

FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT AND A SENSE OF CONNECTION

> A school should not be a preparation for life.
> A school should be life.
>
> *—Elbert Hubbard*

Schools and communities committed to educating the whole child foster engagement with and a sense of connection for students to the school community. Together they provide a variety of opportunities for meaningful student involvement, interest-based activities, and personalized responses to students' learning needs. Often these opportunities are framed through experiential learning that allows young people to practice the skills, knowledge, and behaviors required for participation in society.

In 2003, The Center for Adolescent Health and Development at the University of Minnesota convened a conference that teamed researchers in the health and education sectors with government representatives to develop a core set of principles to guide schools on issues of school connectedness. Their statement, "Wingspread Declaration on School Connections" (2004), included five core elements:



- Student success increases through strengthened bonds with school.
- Students feel connected when they experience high expectations for academic success, feel supported by staff, and feel safe in their school.
- School connectedness affects critical accountability measures, such as academic performance, fighting, truancy, and dropout rates.
- School connectedness increases educational motivation, classroom engagement, and attendance, which can then be linked to higher academic achievement.
- School connectedness can lower rates of disruptive behavior, substance and tobacco use, emotional distress, and early age of first sex.

Meaningful student involvement in school includes opportunities to provide leadership, engage in decision making, and participate in planning learning experiences. It reinforces critical thinking, active problem solving, civic participation, and an appreciation for diverse opinions. Schools and communities that foster meaningful student involvement support organized student participation in education decision making, planning, research, and advocacy, and the integration of such activities into daily curricular and instructional practices (Fletcher, 2003).

Quest High School, located outside of Houston, Texas, was established on the principles of shared leadership and shared decision making. Understanding of and commitment to education of the whole child is built into every policy. Students at Quest are actively involved in curriculum writing. They plan, assess, and monitor their own wellness plan, including elements of physical, social, and emotional health, and complete their studies with a research-based social action plan. Character education and civic responsibility are not just part of the curriculum but part of the students' lives through the structure of the school. Teachers use the title "facilitator" and lead "families" of 20–25 students in "houses" rather than classrooms. Families meet daily and students remain in the same family over four years, helping students develop interpersonal skills that enhance their success in academics and other areas. As one student put it, "Quest has helped me to take time to think about what I'm learning. Quest does make me think and learn instead of memorizing just to forget a week later. Above that, my actual character has improved. I don't feel awkward, and I have a lot of confidence in myself. I am more responsible as well." Quest is the highest-rated high school in its district, receiving the second-highest level of recognition on Texas' school accountability measure in 2006.

The state of New Hampshire has embarked on a large-scale effort to transform teaching and learning practices in its schools. The state's comprehensive education reform plan is grounded in a commitment to effectively incorporate real-world learning into the fabric of New Hampshire's public schools. In practice, New Hampshire's schools are increasingly using partners beyond the schoolhouse—local organizations, businesses, and government agencies—to educate children. The strategies move a step beyond the practice of sending students outside the school door to engage in periodic learning at local community sites. Embedded in New Hampshire's vision is an open-door policy that allows community members to enter as trusted educators while students exit for class credits earned in real-world settings. In this model, the local museum curator becomes a purveyor of art and history knowledge, afternoon gymnastics classes are counted as credit for physical education requirement, and the researcher at the local aquarium is the science teacher for two days a week. New Hampshire's model of schooling demands statewide understanding of and agreement to expectations and outcomes for its children.

ENGAGING AND TRAINING CARING ADULTS

Through interactions with responsive, respectful adults—regardless of their role within a child's life—children learn to imitate, and then internalize, valued social, physical, cognitive, or ethical behaviors. When children believe that the adults around them care about who they are and what they know and what they can do, they are more likely to respond to what those adults value and take those values as their own. If there is a cohesive thread among each of the studies, reports, and examples we have cited thus far, it is the influence of positive, respectful, supportive relationships between students and adults within the school and community.

- Wingspread Declaration on School Connections: Positive adult-student relationships are critical for student connectedness.
- Learning First Alliance: We learn best from those with whom we are in caring mutually respectful relationships that promote independence.
- California Department of Education: Most important in determining the school environment is the quality of students' relationships with other students and with the school's staff.

Further, recent recommendations by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2004) and by the National Middle School Association (2006) specifically reflect the imperative of well-trained adults who engage in positive relationships with students. Smaller schools that foster enhanced relationships between adults and students experience lower rates of fighting and disruptive behavior and improved rates of attendance, graduation, participation in extracurricular activities, and academic achievement—particularly among students from low-income and minority backgrounds (Learning First Alliance, 2001). Even large schools, however, can take steps to build positive relationships between students and ensure that each student is well known by a caring adult and feels valued for his personal contribution to the school environment.

■ ■ ■

In Long Beach, California, Stevenson-YMCA Community School works with community-based organizations and parents to develop students' social, emotional, physical, moral, and academic competencies. The YMCA acts as a lead partner, providing resources and space and hiring a community school coordinator. Community and student leadership institutes, after-school enrichment, and adult education classes—many led by residents—are at the heart of the community school. Mental health services are available on-site, and the school has a close relationship with a nearby community health center, which provides medical services. The principal is convinced that the school must pay attention to the whole child to help students succeed academically. And the results bear out this belief: Stevenson is meeting adequate yearly progress and has been designated a California Distinguished School.

ENSURING BROAD-BASED EDUCATION FOR EACH CHILD

Schools hold themselves accountable for ensuring that each student entrusted to them has the academic and cultural tools needed to succeed—and for creating a lifelong passion for learning. These schools have a clear understanding of what their students should know and be able to do, and an even clearer understanding of how children and adolescents learn. No two students are the same, and the most successful schools and districts reflect this.

No graduate's education is complete without opportunities to develop applied skills necessary for the workplace. Often these skills—such as teamwork,

critical thinking, and communication—are essential parts of athletics, music, and community-based projects—areas that are fighting for time in the school schedule. Students need time in the arts and civics and traditional academics to hone these skills within both the school and the community. A 2006 survey of human resources professionals found that high school graduates lacked competence in these essential skills (Conference Board et al., 2006).

- More than half (58 percent) of responding employers say critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are "very important" for incoming high school graduates' successful job performance, yet nearly three-quarters of respondents (70 percent) rated recently hired high school graduates as deficient in critical thinking.
- Twenty-eight percent of employers project that their companies will reduce hiring of new entrants with only a high school diploma over the next five years, while 49.5 percent said the percentages of two-year college graduates they hire would increase.
- Almost 60 percent said their hires of four-year college graduates would increase.

■ ■ ■

Facing challenges in providing education to an increasingly ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body from several neighboring communities, Hand Middle School in Columbia, South Carolina, restructured its curriculum and approaches to learning. The result was a new schoolwide, arts-focused learning community with strong learning partnerships between the arts and education. Each grade is divided into smaller teams of 100–125 students, and students spend the school year focused on a theme that frames their course content. Parents, teachers, and administrators together choose a schoolwide theme to guide the academic year. Since the transformation, Hand has seen an 85 percent increase in academic performance, and in 2004 was named one of only five Creative Ticket National Schools of Distinction by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

■ ■ ■

Hamilton County Public Schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee, have experienced a remarkable turnaround: dramatic reading gains in urban elementary schools, more challenging and engaging high schools, and better trained teachers and leaders. In 2000, only 18 percent of 3rd graders were reading at or above grade level, and the district had nine of the lowest-performing elementary schools in the state. By 2006, 74 percent of students tested proficient or advanced in reading, and the once failing schools outgained more than 90 percent of all schools in Tennessee.

In 2001, Hamilton County Public Schools received an $8 million grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York's New Schools for a New Society. The Chattanooga Public Education Fund committed to raising a matching $6 million for high school reform. Hamilton adopted a key strategy: a single-path diploma for all students that raises graduation rates and prepares students for four-year college or a higher skill job. Each school developed its own reform blueprint while addressing four basic goals: creating a more challenging, relevant, and engaging curriculum; improving teaching by providing more professional development; providing a more personalized and engaging experience for students; and maintaining flexibility in meeting student needs more effectively.

Eleven high schools have career academies, including business, technology, engineering, environmental sciences, global studies, transportation, health sciences, and construction. Some schools host several academies, but all academies combine college preparatory work with a career theme to make academic learning more relevant and challenging.

All schools have a summer transition program for 9th graders, and some are creating 9th grade academies that give students more individual attention in this critical year.

CONCLUSION

Educators and the American public have long agreed that education must both include and go well beyond the academics of reading, writing, and mathematics. Yet for our educational system and communities to develop whole children, we must act, not talk; act in fundamentally different, not marginally different, ways; and act as schools, communities, and nations to ensure a deservedly brighter future for our children. We have identified schools and districts that evidence a different and better way for schools, districts, and communities; we can do better.

We are calling for a simple change that will have radical implications: put the child at the center of decision making and allocate resources—time, space, and human—to ensure each child's success. We call for a shift in how schools and communities look at young people's learning. Lay aside the perennial battles for resources and instead align those resources in support of the whole child.

We urge action on the following recommendations.

ASCD calls on educators, communities and policymakers to work together to fulfill the new compact for the education of the whole child. Successful implementation of these policies results in successful learners who are knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically active, artistically engaged, prepared for economic self-sufficiency and ready for the world beyond formal schooling. We call upon policymaking bodies from local school boards through the United States Congress to embrace and implement these suggestions to ensure we, as a society, meet our new compact with today's students and tomorrow's leaders.

THE NEW COMPACT

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.

Each graduate is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

Schools and communities committed to educating the whole child create an environment that promotes the learning and practice of healthy lifestyles. This includes healthy menus at school, regular recess, physical and health education, school counseling, and intramural programs. Schools and communities collaborate to increase access to health care for children and their families.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. Collaborate with local health and social service agencies to ensure access to health services.
2. Provide healthy food options for breakfast and lunch and at school-sponsored events.
3. Provide physical education programs, recess for elementary students, and health education programs.
4. Provide an environment that enables students and staff to practice healthy behaviors.

COMMUNITIES

1. Collaborate with school districts and health and social service agencies to ensure access to health services for children and their families.
2. Offer incentives for schools to purchase healthy, alternative food products.
3. Coordinate community recreation programs with schools to ensure equitable access to those programs and facilities.
4. Provide support to schools that promote healthy school communities.

STATES

1. Create legislation and regulations that encourage schools and health and social service agencies to collaborate to provide services to children and their families.
2. Provide incentives for schools to eliminate nonnutritional food and snacks.
3. Create and fund school readiness programs for all children that include health, nutrition, and academic programs.
4. Provide incentives and funding for schools and communities to create healthy school communities.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Provides incentives for schools and health and social service agencies to collaborate to provide comprehensive services through flexible use of funding programs.
2. Eliminates high-fat and nonnutritious foods from the federal lunch program.
3. Provides incentives and funding for effective health, nutrition, and school readiness programs.
4. Requires schools to have comprehensive plans for fostering healthy school communities.

Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

Schools and communities committed to educating the whole child work together to ensure the physical and emotional safety and security of each child. They consistently assess comprehensive safety issues to foster effective conditions for learning.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. Conduct regular school climate surveys of students, staff, and parents.
2. Develop school-based programs that involve students and staff, such as peer mediation and conflict resolution, to ensure a positive school climate.
3. Develop district policy for incorporating social and emotional development into the district's educational program.

COMMUNITIES

1. Collaborate with districts to support opportunities for student employment and involvement in community-based activities.
2. Collaborate to ensure young people have a variety of safe options for recreational and cultural activities outside school.

STATES

1. Develop and implement policy that incorporates social and emotional learning into state standards and licensure requirements.
2. Provide resources and incentives for communities to develop comprehensive youth development plans that incorporate social and emotional development.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Eliminates barriers that obstruct cooperation between school districts and law enforcement agencies.
2. Provides resources and incentives for communities to develop comprehensive youth development plans that incorporate social and emotional development.

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

Schools and communities engage students in the learning process and provide opportunities that connect them to the community. Students who are engaged and connected to their schools demonstrate increased academic achievement, attendance rates, and participation in activities.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. Develop student-centered academic plans and a process for students to provide input throughout their academic careers.
2. Ensure a full complement of extracurricular activities.
3. Develop processes for student participation in schoolwide decision making and governance.

COMMUNITIES

1. Collaborate with school districts to provide learning opportunities in both schools and the community.
2. Help schools develop extracurricular and after-school activities that incorporate community experiences.
3. Provide opportunities for community-based learning through apprenticeships with local businesses.

STATES

1. Support districts and communities that provide community-based learning experiences for students.
2. Fund comprehensive before- and after-school programs, and ensure access to these programs for all students, preK–12.
3. Provide resources and flexibility for schools and communities to establish school-community programs that encourage out-of-school experiences for students.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Supports personalized learning programs through flexibility in assessment and graduation requirements.
2. Provides funding and resources for out-of-school programs.
3. Waives prescriptive requirements for school improvement in favor of locally developed plans.

Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.

School and communities connect students with caring adults throughout a student's school career through a variety of positive relationships. These relationships reinforce academic achievement and social, civic, ethical, and emotional development.

SCHOOLS

1. Ensure that every student has an adult mentor who is a consistent advisor.
2. Redesign school schedules to ensure adequate time for mentoring.
3. Provide professional development that supports effective mentoring programs.

COMMUNITIES

1. Collaborate with schools to provide qualified mentors to students.
2. Work with schools to develop out-of-school learning opportunities for students.

STATES

1. Provide flexible scheduling options for schools to provide mentoring programs.
2. Support and fund professional development for mentors.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Provides financial incentives and support for community and school mentoring programs.
2. Funds and disseminates information about effective mentoring programs.

Each graduate is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

Students engage in a broad spectrum of activities in and out of the classroom. Districts and communities work together to prepare young people for success in higher education and employment by providing meaningful learning experiences and opportunities to demonstrate achievement.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. Develop policies to ensure academic support and customized learning options for both college and workforce preparation.
2. Create flexible pathways to high school graduation.
3. Provide access to rigorous arts, foreign language, and social studies programs.

COMMUNITIES

1. Collaborate with school districts to provide learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships, outside the classroom.
2. Support flexible pathways to graduation by providing community-based opportunities to demonstrate achievement.
3. Identify and develop community arts resources.

STATES

1. Implement flexible graduation requirements that permit local innovation regarding course credits and assessment.
2. Ensure adequate funding for arts, foreign languages, and social studies programs.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Provides incentives and resources for high schools to increase graduation rates.
2. Ensures funding for training qualified teachers in the arts, foreign languages, and social studies.

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MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION ON THE WHOLE CHILD

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New Hampshire State Board of Education
Durham, New Hampshire

Peter Cobb
Cobb & Associates
Atlanta, Georgia

James Comer
Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center
Comer School Development Program
New Haven, Connecticut

Elliot Eisner
Curriculum Studies & Teacher Education
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California

Edward B. Fiske
The Fiske Guides to Colleges
Durham, North Carolina

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S. Graham Associates
Chicago, Illinois

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Office of Policy and Research
Columbia University
New York, New York

Lawrence Kohn
Atascocita High School
Humble, Texas

Lloyd J. Kolbe
Department of Applied Health Science
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Bloomington, Indiana

Stephanie Pace Marshall, Cochair
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
Wheaton, Illinois

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Bronx Preparatory School
Bronx, New York

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Englewood, Colorado

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Palo Alto, California

Pedro Noguera
Department of Teaching and Learning
New York University
New York, New York

Hugh Price, Cochair
The Brookings Institution
Washington, D.C.

Kate Quarfordt
Artistic Program
Bronx Preparatory School
Bronx, New York

Suellen Reed
Office of Public Instruction
State of Indiana
Indianapolis, Indiana

Doris Williams
Capacity Building Program
The Rural School and Community Trust
Arlington, Virginia

ABOUT ASCD

Founded in 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents more than 170,000 educators from 135 countries and more than 60 affiliates. Our members are professional educators from all levels and subject areas—superintendents, supervisors, principals, teachers, professors of education, and school board members.

Because our membership is so large, we represent as many members of individual professions as do the profession-based cohort groups, with the exception of teachers.

We are education's largest leadership organization:

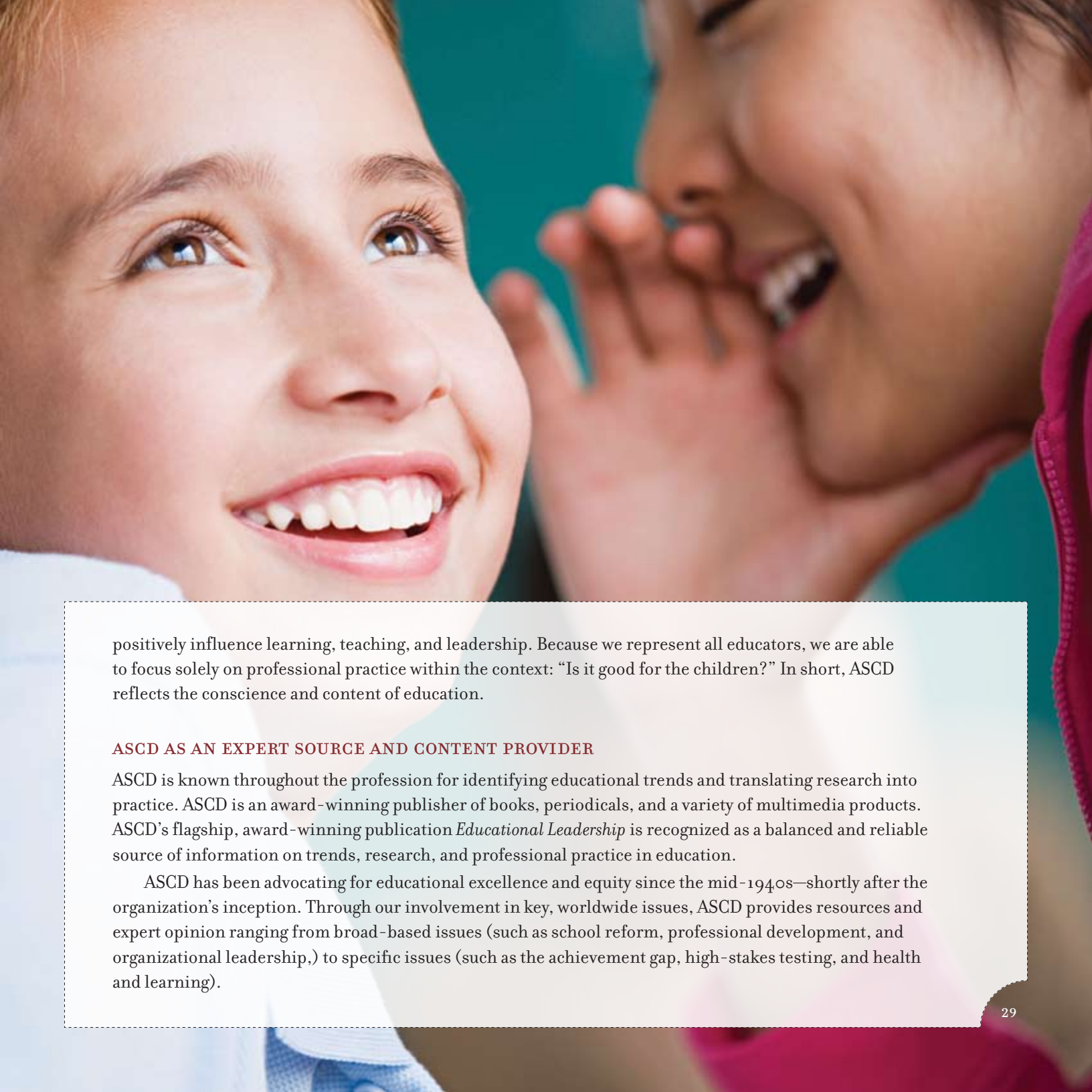
- About one in three principals and assistant principals in the United States are members.
- Nearly half of all U.S. district-level administrators are members.
- Many of the nation's top teachers are members.

As our name reflects, ASCD was initially envisioned to represent "curriculum" and "supervision" issues. Over the years, our focus has changed. We now address all aspects of effective learning, teaching and leadership (e.g., professional development, educational leadership, and capacity building). We do so by advocating for policy and practice that is in the best interest of children. Since its inception, ASCD has built on a core set of values and beliefs in support of the whole child. We believe that student success is dependent not only on academic knowledge but also on physical and emotional health, engagement, and motivation.

These same values and beliefs inform our organizational life. Our 200 staff are committed to the success of each learner through their daily work. Our culture is anchored in our beliefs while exemplifying the fluidity necessary to make a difference in today's world and tomorrow's. We conduct our work in a businesslike manner, with an efficiency and effectiveness that gives us the resources to live out our mission. With a history of success, we are committed to a future of significance, where ASCD contributes to the common good of our young people.

ASCD AS AN ADVOCATE

ASCD offers multiple and broad perspectives—across all education professions—in advocating sound education policies and best practices. We provide "in the field" perspectives on policies and practices that



positively influence learning, teaching, and leadership. Because we represent all educators, we are able to focus solely on professional practice within the context: "Is it good for the children?" In short, ASCD reflects the conscience and content of education.

ASCD AS AN EXPERT SOURCE AND CONTENT PROVIDER

ASCD is known throughout the profession for identifying educational trends and translating research into practice. ASCD is an award-winning publisher of books, periodicals, and a variety of multimedia products. ASCD's flagship, award-winning publication *Educational Leadership* is recognized as a balanced and reliable source of information on trends, research, and professional practice in education.

ASCD has been advocating for educational excellence and equity since the mid-1940s—shortly after the organization's inception. Through our involvement in key, worldwide issues, ASCD provides resources and expert opinion ranging from broad-based issues (such as school reform, professional development, and organizational leadership,) to specific issues (such as the achievement gap, high-stakes testing, and health and learning).

To be a whole child takes a whole education

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION AND
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

1703 NORTH BEAUREGARD STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22311–1714 USA

PHONE: 1.800.933.2723 or 1.703.578.9600
FAX: 1.703.575.5400

www.ascd.org