

Chapter 3 outlines the benefits of small high schools for students and teachers. Chapter 4 discusses strategies for change at the technical, managerial, and cultural levels, noting that change at the cultural level is the most difficult to achieve and has the greatest effect.

Back to Top 2. What are the key conditions for learning that community schools work to fulfill? Schools, together with their communities, must work to fulfill six conditions for learning that we have identified as necessary for every child to succeed, based on an analysis of research. Early childhood development is fostered through high-quality, comprehensive programs that nurture learning and development. The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students. Students are motivated and engaged in learning -- both in school and in community settings, during and after school. The basic physical, mental and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff. Community engagement, together with school efforts, promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful and connects students to a broader learning community. Back to Top 3. What happens at a community schools, and what is the curriculum like? Community schools focus in four areas: Particular programs and services vary school-to-school based on local needs and goals. Learning takes place both inside and outside of the typical school day -- at home, and in the community. Community school partnerships leverage community partners to make learning engaging, motivating, and community-based. Youth have a voice and choice in what they learn and give back to the community. Areas of expanded learning of interest include: Partnerships with local higher education institutions, businesses, arts and cultural institutions, environmental organizations and community based organizations make this possible. Community schools provide enriching experiences for young people built on strong adult youth relationships and peer learning. Activities might include mentoring, conflict resolution and mediation, student advocacy, youth leadership, and others that enable young people to find and build on their strengths. Community schools ensure that students aspire to college, a productive career, and active citizenship. Included are early and continuous exposure to college and career opportunities; visits to higher education institutions and businesses; college prep activities including counseling, test preparation, support in the application process and with financial aid; and sustained support during key transitions. Community schools offer a wide array of supports and services for students and families -- from health and mental health to family supports, from feeding programs and substance abuse prevention to crisis intervention and counseling, and an array of other supports within the broad rubrics of health and social services. Youth spend much of their time at home and in the community. These are learning opportunities that community schools are able to leverage. We are interested in workshops that demonstrate how families and communities support learning inside of the school building, and how the school and its partners create learning opportunities in the home. With the intent of engaging families more deeply in the education of their children, community schools offer an array of activities e. In sustainable community schools, community stakeholders help develop and execute the vision. Together with school leaders, community stakeholders plan and implement programs such as GED, ESL, and job training classes, and food and clothing pantries. They also offer community activities such as arts, cultural and athletic events and provide a place to gather and solve specific community problems. Community schools have strong relationships with youth and community organizing groups that seek positive change in the school and community, and ensure accountability to the community. In this process, community schools provide blueprints for sustainable and replicable early childhood education systems. Back to Top 4. What are the key ingredients in organizing and operating community schools? Here are the key ingredients for a strong community school: Back to Top 5. How are community schools funded? Funding for community schools can be structured in many ways. The most sustainable funding arrangements draw from a diverse pool of funders -- often pulling together existing resources and redirecting them to support the programs and supports that the school offers. One helpful strategy is to think about funding your community schools in two essential

parts: A community school coordinator can be employed by a school district, community-based organization, university, or public agency. Funding typically comes from multiple public and private sources. Salaries for this position should be at a professional level and competitive with those of people in similar roles, e. Monies from school systems, United Ways, community foundations, local government, higher education institutions, CBOs and others are being utilized for this purpose. Funding Opportunities, Supports and Services Opportunities, supports and services at community schools are financed through a variety of public and private funding streams. These funds come from every conceivable funding stream dedicated to address the needs of young people and families. In addition, foundations, corporations and individuals provide funding. Often these funds are not in the hands of school districts; however, local government, community-based organizations, health systems, and other community partners manage them. The opportunity is to create an environment in the community school that encourages community partners to bring their programs into the school and encourages the school to reach out into the community. Resources inside the School Schools may have social workers, counselors, nurses, and psychologists, often called special instructional support personnel, or they may finance after school programs or other opportunities and supports for students e. These assets must be integrated with those of community partners so that all resources are focused on common goals and used effectively and efficiently. Back to Top 6. Why do we need community schools? How do community schools address equity? Research and experience tell us that all of our young people need a wide range of learning opportunities and supports to succeed. A quality academic program is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Community schools are the vehicle for doing both. For data related to each of these factors see the following reports:

Chapter 2 : Community Services / Homepage

Schools can readily assess the degree to which students experience community in school by asking students how much they agree or disagree with such statements as My class is like a family. Students in my class help one another learn.

Description[edit] Samberg and Sheeran define community schools as "both a set of partnerships and a place where services, supports, and opportunities lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. The following definitions are attempts to clarify some terminology used in discussions around FSCSs. Linked services involve collaborative strategies, in which partners can share a vision, establish goals, and use resources to implement and deliver the services. School-based services are more directly linkedâ€”physically and fiscallyâ€”to the school campus. The school becomes the vehicle to mobilize its surrounding community. The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students. Students are motivated and engaged in learningâ€”both in school and in community settings, during and after school. The basic physical, mental, and emotional needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff. Community engagement, together with school efforts, promote a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community. Primary health clinics â€” These facilities, operated in school buildings by outside health agencies, can provide primary health care, emergency care, dental examinations, mental health counseling, and health education. Youth development programs â€” Some community schools put together a number of different youth activities, including mentoring, substance abuse counseling, sports and recreation, community service learning, and pre-employment services. Family resource centers â€” Community schools can offer services for parents, such as parenting education, literacy, employment assistance, immigration information, housing help, food, clothing, case management, health services, and early child care. Early childhood development â€” Early childhood programs, such as Head Start , can relocate into schools and can provide services including, all-day child care, after-school and vacation care, and family support and guidance through a home visitation program. After-school programs â€” After-school programs are important for the effectiveness of schools by providing school-age children with academic and nonacademic support. Community School Examples[edit] A number of community school models have sprung up around the country. Beacons, introduced in New York City through the Department of Youth and Community Development, are heavily involved with community service projects to help enhance the neighborhood. CAS also nationally provides technical assistance to community schools. Partnerships and Governance[edit] At the school site, the partnerships exist between principals, teachers, other school staff, and multiple community partners. Their goal is to create learning opportunities and services to help students develop academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. Additional partners with school site personnel are volunteers from public agencies, local government officials, non-profit agencies, community-based and faith-based organizations, philanthropies, businesses, and higher education personnel. Schools are the center of the community, and the shared resources lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. Alternatively, the principal can act with a full-time coordinator who works for another agency. Out of the collective of partnerships between the school and community agencies, a lead agency often emerges, usually to extend the hours of the school and the scope of services provided. Dewey stated, "The conception of the schools as a social center is born of our entire democratic movement. Psychologists, school nurses, and social workers became an increasing part of the public school system between and The Full-Service Community Schools Act of will authorize the United States Department of Education grant program to expand the number of full-service community schools across the nation. The bill would fund grants for states to expand the model at the state level and also for local partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations. The Act promotes a shared approach to education by authorizing grants to incentivize partnerships between schools, parents, business leaders, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations. In Parsing the Achievement Gap, Barton and Coley identify eight factors

before and beyond school that influence the achievement gap, including: Children differ on how ready they are to fully engage in school everyday. These differences are strongly influenced by their social class. Children in lower-income households: In order to raise student academic achievement, lower-class children must live in better social and economic conditions. And schools alone - not even the very best schools - cannot erase the effects of poverty. In recent years, policymakers have focused on how to achieve higher test scores without addressing the influence of poverty. The results have mostly been discouraging. Education Secretary Arne Duncan claims that thousands of schools across America are chronically underperforming; in New York, Mayor Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein have shut down more than schools in eight years. Inevitably, the struggling schools serve the poorest children and experience the greatest challenges. It will take more than pressure and tough talk to improve these schools. Through its partnerships, community schools can address a wider range of the issues facing these children and families. The Need for Community Schools[edit] Dryfoos and Maguire propose that children in different communities face significant barriers to learning that schools cannot overcome alone. Supportive adults â€” Community schools can ensure that relationships are established between young people and adults in the community i. Extended learning opportunities â€” Community schools can open have schools open for longer hours, which can allow for creative enrichment programs and after-school programs that can integrate activities with classroom curriculum. Lifelong learning â€” If open during evenings and weekends, community schools can be convenient centers for adults to take credit and noncredit courses to advance their careers or enhance their lives. Opportunity to perform community service â€” Community schools can facilitate service learning placements in the community and can ensure that the knowledge gained from the experience is integrated into the classroom instruction. Access to health care â€” Community schools can encompass on-site primary health and mental health clinics with trained professionals from community agencies. Integration of services â€” Community schools can bring together different services and agencies to one site, with centralized records and common policies. Safe communities â€” Community schools can provide a safe place for children early in the morning to late in the evening. Positive school environment â€” In order for students and parents to feel more connected to the school, community schools can create service networks to deal with problem behaviors on site. Basic needs â€” In addition to lunch, community schools can institute breakfast, snack, and dinner programs, to meet the needs of students who are coming to school hungry. Through a family resource center, community schools can also ensure that children have warm clothing, and that parents find adequate housing. Quality education â€” Community schools can create a more effective environment through allowing teachers to focus on teaching, since partnerships with community agencies can focus on behavioral and social issues and can plan activities and programs that can be integrated into the school curriculum. Education, Human Capital, and Economic Growth[edit] Michael Engle discusses the development of research around the relationship between education, human capital, and economic growth. He discusses conclusions by other researchers since the s around the high rate of returns on individual investments in education as measured by income. Engle concludes that, "Money for schools could be regarded not as consumption spending but as an investment in human resources that will pay off in the future. Additionally, Wilensky and Kline argue that the widely believed notion that public schools are meant to prepare students for jobs and economic productivity is false and risks failure at the outset. They argue that educators must look beyond the marketplace in defining the mission of public schools and must instead help create schools and communities that contribute to a positive community culture. Other Education Reform Efforts[edit] Among the many educational reform efforts, such as charter schools , school vouchers , magnet schools , and alternative schools , the full-service community school model is one of many educational reform efforts that are intended to increase student achievement, but the full-service community school model specifically focuses on the development of the community as a whole. A charter school receives public funds but is not subject to all of the rules, regulations, and statutes public schools must adhere to. A charter school is accountable to what is sent forth in its individual charter. A school voucher is a certificate issued by the government to allow families to apply it the cover the tuition at a private school. A magnet school is a public school with specialized courses and curricula. An alternative school is a school that serves students who are at risk of not achieving academically or are better served by a

non-traditional program. Academic and Non-Academic Support[edit] Of all developed countries, the United States has the most children living in poverty, and the poverty in the U. Families of different social classes are more likely to receive different amounts of support. Additionally, the quality of assessments between schools varies enormously, which also contributes to the difficulty of the evaluation. It is important to note that many community school models are designed to affect not only education outcomes but also other outcomes that, in turn, are known to affect education outcomes. Such intermediate outcomes include improved social behavior and healthy youth development, better family functioning and increased parental involvement, enhanced school and community climate, and access to support services. In districts across America, community schools are improving student learning, strengthening families and schools, and building communities so that they all function together to contribute to student success. The results were classified into four categories: Attendance – 19 programs reported improvements in school attendance, and several reported lower drop out rates of students. Suspensions – 11 programs reported a reduction in suspensions, but this may be due to changes in suspension policies at schools. Family Well-Being Parent Involvement – At least 12 programs reported an increase in parent involvement. Family Functioning – Improved family functioning was reported for many community school programs with a strong focus on family. Community Life Access to Services – Each program was reported at least once for having better access to health care, access to dental care, lower hospitalization rates, and higher immunization rates. Neighborhood – Six programs reported lower violence rates and also safer streets in their communities. Barriers to Creating FSCSs[edit] Dryfoos and Maguire mention some of the implementation barriers that many community schools face, which include: Turf – The responsibility and space of the community schools can feel like it belongs to teachers during the school day and to outside agencies during the extended-day program. Maintenance – Extending the school hours can create a great deal of pressure on maintenance and custodial staff. Cost is a significant consideration when dealing with transportation problems because providing additional busing can be very expensive. Confidentiality – Sharing difficulties can arise, especially when community schools are trying to integrate two different cultures, such as school and social support. Discipline – School personnel and community agency personnel have different views about how to deal with discipline issues. Discipline policies will need to be established in the planning stage of the community school. Sufficient Funding – Most community schools depend on multiple sources of funding beyond state and federal per-pupil dollars. This funding burden can fall on the principal or the community-based organization, depending on the community school model being employed.

Chapter 3 : Creating a School Community - Educational Leadership

Similarly, the high school redesign should be centered on helping the whole community. In many struggling communities, the local high school is the sole institution still connected to the.

Richard DuFour The idea of improving schools by developing professional learning communities is currently in vogue. People use this term to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education—a grade-level teaching team, a school committee, a high school department, an entire school district, a state department of education, a national professional organization, and so on. In fact, the term has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning. The professional learning community model has now reached a critical juncture, one well known to those who have witnessed the fate of other well-intentioned school reform efforts. In this all-too-familiar cycle, initial enthusiasm gives way to confusion about the fundamental concepts driving the initiative, followed by inevitable implementation problems, the conclusion that the reform has failed to bring about the desired results, abandonment of the reform, and the launch of a new search for the next promising initiative.

Ensuring That Students Learn The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications for schools. But when a school staff takes that statement literally—when teachers view it as a pledge to ensure the success of each student rather than as politically correct hyperbole—profound changes begin to take place. The school staff finds itself asking, What school characteristics and practices have been most successful in helping all students achieve at high levels? How could we adopt those characteristics and practices in our own school? What commitments would we have to make to one another to create such a school? What indicators could we monitor to assess our progress? When the staff has built shared knowledge and found common ground on these questions, the school has a solid foundation for moving forward with its improvement initiative. As the school moves forward, every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community: What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? The answer to the third question separates learning communities from traditional schools. Here is a scenario that plays out daily in traditional schools. A teacher teaches a unit to the best of his or her ability, but at the conclusion of the unit some students have not mastered the essential outcomes. On the one hand, the teacher would like to take the time to help those students. If the teacher uses instructional time to assist students who have not learned, the progress of students who have mastered the content will suffer; if the teacher pushes on with new concepts, the struggling students will fall farther behind. What typically happens in this situation? Almost invariably, the school leaves the solution to the discretion of individual teachers, who vary widely in the ways they respond. Some teachers conclude that the struggling students should transfer to a less rigorous course or should be considered for special education. Some lower their expectations by adopting less challenging standards for subgroups of students within their classrooms. Some look for ways to assist the students before and after school. Some allow struggling students to fail. When a school begins to function as a professional learning community, however, teachers become aware of the incongruity between their commitment to ensure learning for all students and their lack of a coordinated strategy to respond when some students do not learn. The staff addresses this discrepancy by designing strategies to ensure that struggling students receive additional time and support, no matter who their teacher is. The school quickly identifies students who need additional time and support. Based on intervention rather than remediation. The plan provides students with help as soon as they experience difficulty rather than relying on summer school, retention, and remedial courses. Instead of inviting students to seek additional help, the systematic plan requires students to devote extra time and receive additional assistance until they have mastered the necessary concepts. The systematic, timely, and directive intervention program operating at Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, provides an excellent example. Every three weeks, every student receives a

progress report. Within the first month of school, new students discover that if they are not doing well in a class, they will receive a wide array of immediate interventions. First, the teacher, counselor, and faculty advisor each talk with the student individually to help resolve the problem. In addition, the school offers the struggling student a pass from study hall to a school tutoring center to get additional help in the course. Any student who continues to fall short of expectations at the end of six weeks despite these interventions is required, rather than invited, to attend tutoring sessions during the study hall period. If tutoring fails to bring about improvement within the next six weeks, the student is assigned to a daily guided study hall with 10 or fewer students. The guided study hall supervisor communicates with classroom teachers to learn exactly what homework each student needs to complete and monitors the completion of that homework. Parents attend a meeting at the school at which the student, parents, counselor, and classroom teacher must sign a contract clarifying what each party will do to help the student meet the standards for the course. Stevenson High School serves more than 4, students. Like Stevenson, schools that are truly committed to the concept of learning for each student will stop subjecting struggling students to a haphazard education lottery. These schools will guarantee that each student receives whatever additional support he or she needs. A Culture of Collaboration Educators who are building a professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Therefore, they create structures to promote a collaborative culture. Despite compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents best practice, teachers in many schools continue to work in isolation. Other staffs join forces to develop consensus on operational procedures, such as how they will respond to tardiness or supervise recess. Although each of these activities can serve a useful purpose, none represents the kind of professional dialogue that can transform a school into a professional learning community. The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement. Collaborating for School Improvement At Boones Mill Elementary School, a K-5 school serving students in rural Franklin County, Virginia, the powerful collaboration of grade-level teams drives the school improvement process. The following scenario describes what Boones Mill staff members refer to as their teaching-learning process. They also ask the 4th grade teachers what they hope students will have mastered by the time they leave 3rd grade. On the basis of the shared knowledge generated by this joint study, the 3rd grade team agrees on the critical outcomes that they will make sure each student achieves during the unit. Team members discuss the most authentic and valid ways to assess student mastery. They set the standard for each skill or concept that each student must achieve to be deemed proficient. They agree on the criteria by which they will judge the quality of student work, and they practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently. Finally, they decide when they will administer the assessments. After each teacher has examined the results of the common formative assessment for his or her students, the team analyzes how all 3rd graders performed. Team members identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning and begin to discuss how they can build on the strengths and address the weaknesses. The entire team gains new insights into what is working and what is not, and members discuss new strategies that they can implement in their classrooms to raise student achievement. At Boones Mill, collaborative conversations happen routinely throughout the year. These discussions give every teacher someone to turn to and talk to, and they are explicitly structured to improve the classroom practice of teachers—individually and collectively. For teachers to participate in such a powerful process, the school must ensure that everyone belongs to a team that focuses on student learning. Each team must have time to meet during the workday and throughout the school year. Teams must focus their efforts on crucial questions related to learning and generate products that reflect that focus, such as lists of essential outcomes, different kinds of assessment, analyses of student achievement, and strategies for improving results. Teams must develop norms or protocols to clarify expectations regarding roles, responsibilities, and relationships among team members. Teams must adopt student achievement goals linked with school and district goals. Removing Barriers to Success For meaningful collaboration to occur, a number of things must also stop happening. Schools must stop pretending that merely presenting teachers with state standards or district curriculum guides

will guarantee that all students have access to a common curriculum. Even school districts that devote tremendous time and energy to designing the intended curriculum often pay little attention to the implemented curriculum what teachers actually teach and even less to the attained curriculum what students learn Marzano, Schools must also give teachers time to analyze and discuss state and district curriculum documents. Few educators publicly assert that working in isolation is the best strategy for improving schools. Instead, they give reasons why it is impossible for them to work together: As Roland Barth wrote, Are teachers and administrators willing to accept the fact that they are part of the problem? We didâ€™ because we find working alone safer than and preferable to working together. A group of staff members who are determined to work together will find a way. A Focus on Results Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school. Every teacher team participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress. The focus of team goals shifts. The results-oriented professional learning community not only welcomes data but also turns data into useful and relevant information for staff. Teachers have never suffered from a lack of data. Even a teacher who works in isolation can easily establish the mean, mode, median, standard deviation, and percentage of students who demonstrated proficiency every time he or she administers a test. However, data will become a catalyst for improved teacher practice only if the teacher has a basis of comparison. When teacher teams develop common formative assessments throughout the school year, each teacher can identify how his or her students performed on each skill compared with other students. Individual teachers can call on their team colleagues to help them reflect on areas of concern. Each teacher has access to the ideas, materials, strategies, and talents of the entire team. Freeport Intermediate School, located 50 miles south of Houston, Texas, attributes its success to an unrelenting focus on results. Teachers work in collaborative teams for 90 minutes daily to clarify the essential outcomes of their grade levels and courses and to align those outcomes with state standards. They develop consistent instructional calendars and administer the same brief assessment to all students at the same grade level at the conclusion of each instructional unit, roughly once a week. Each quarter, the teams administer a common cumulative exam. Each spring, the teams develop and administer practice tests for the state exam. Each year, the teams pore over the results of the state test, which are broken down to show every teacher how his or her students performed on every skill and on every test item. The teachers share their results from all of these assessments with their colleagues, and they quickly learn when a teammate has been particularly effective in teaching a certain skill.

Chapter 4 : Full-service community schools in the United States - Wikipedia

We, at Global Learning Communities, have helped schools who are re-creating themselves into collaborative learning communities to apply the above principles of living systems throughout their school re-creation efforts.

A New Way of Thinking: In fact, rarely in American history has there been such wide-spread agreement among researchers and practitioners alike regarding how to significantly improve schools. Increasingly, educators across North America are working to re-culture schools into high-performing professional learning communities. There is some good news about public education! What Are Professional Learning Communities? At the most basic level, a professional learning community is a concept “ a way of thinking about schooling ” whether it is at the district, school, team or classroom level ” preferably at every level. While schools that function as professional learning communities do not look exactly alike, they do exhibit certain common characteristics. Dufour, Eaker and Many describe these schools as having the following components deeply embedded in their day-to-day culture. A Focus on Learning Schools that function as professional learning communities operate on the assumption that the fundamental purpose of schools is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. When a school adopts learning for all students as its core mission “ the very reason it exists “ virtually every aspect of the school is affected, both structurally and culturally. In a school that functions as a professional learning community, the emphasis is on embedding the learning mission into the day-to-day work of the entire school. This is done by focusing intensely on four fundamental questions. If we believe the fundamental purpose of schools is learning, just what is it we expect all students to learn? If we believe the fundamental purpose of schools is learning and we are clear about what it is we expect students to learn, how will we know if they have learned it? If we believe the fundamental purpose of schools is learning and we are clear about what it is we expect them to learn and we have a system in place to monitor the learning of each student, how will we, as a school, respond when students experience difficulty with their learning? If we believe the fundamental purpose of schools is learning, and we are clear about what we expect students to learn, and we have a system in place to monitor the learning of each student, how will the school extend and enrich the learning of students when they learn the essential outcomes? Ensuring high levels of learning for all students does create pressure on everyone in every role, but in a professional learning community there is the recognition that this is our job “ what we signed on to do! High Performing Collaborative Teams A professional learning community can best be described as a collaborative culture; a culture in which collaborative teams work to ensure all their students learn. They embed a collaborative culture within the day-to-day life of schools by organizing teachers into collaborative teams. Most importantly, professional learning communities focus on what the teams do. For example, teams are expected to clarify essential outcomes; develop and utilize the results of common, formative assessments; collaboratively analyze student learning particularly the results of formative common assessments ; and reflect on their instructional practices in order to improve the learning levels of their students. Seeking Out Best Practice There are major differences between collaboration in traditional schools and the work of collaborative teams in a professional learning community. In this respect, teams are merely mirroring the behavior of other professionals where the expectation is that behavior should reflect the latest and best knowledge base at any given time. Best practice may be found on another team or at another school. Best practices are often found in journals, professional organizations or on the internet. They reflect on the effectiveness of their own professional practice. They seek to gain deeper understanding regarding ways to improve their effectiveness. Most important, they set meaningful improvement goals. In fact, the key to understanding the power of professional learning communities is to understand the power of collaborative teams taking collective responsibility for results. A New Way of Thinking About Principals To effectively lead schools in new ways, principals must passionately focus on the right things. Principals of professional learning communities are expected to make a seismic shift from being instructional leaders to becoming learning leaders. This role is fulfilled, primarily, by asking the right questions, spending time on the things that will have the greatest impact on student learning and enhancing the effectiveness of collaborative teams. Most basic is the

assumption that how well teams perform depends, to a great degree, on the quality of leadership – both of the principal and within teams. If the leadership capacity of district leaders and principals is a critical correlate of effective schools, it only follows, then, that the leadership behavior of team leaders is crucial also. Rarely, is the role of chair or team leader discussed, much less defined. In a professional learning community position descriptions are collaboratively developed and clearly defined. Equally important is the assumption that the relationship between team leaders and principals must also be clearly defined. Practicing and rehearsing the work with principals as a group, followed by principals and team leaders practicing and rehearsing prior to asking teacher teams to engage in the work, increases the likelihood of success and greatly enhances the quality of the work of individual teams. There are no substitutes for deep understanding, commitment, hard work, passion and persistence. Re-culturing schools to function as professional learning communities is a difficult, complex and incremental journey. However, the goal of achieving higher levels of learning for all students is inherently worthwhile. He has authored and co-authored numerous articles and books on effective teaching practices, school improvement and schools as professional learning communities. A frequent speaker at national conferences, he also regularly consults with school districts across North America. She has authored or co-authored numerous articles on school improvement and implementation of professional learning community concepts and practices. She is a frequent speaker at state, regional and national meetings and consults with schools and school districts throughout North America.

Chapter 5 : Communities In Schools – Marietta and Cobb County

This book describes how administrators, teachers, and students in three high schools have worked to improve their schools. The schools; a suburban vocational-technical school, an urban school for immigrant English-language learners, and an urban second-chance school for students who have failed.

Background[edit] Community service is a non-paying job performed by one person or a group of people for the benefit of the community or its institutions. Community service is distinct from volunteering , since it is not always performed on a voluntary basis. It may be performed for a variety of reasons. It may be required by a government as a part of citizenship requirements, generally in lieu of military service. It may be required as a substitution of, or in addition to, other criminal justice sanctions –” when performed for this reason it may also be referred to as community payback. It may be mandated by schools to meet the requirements of a class, such as in the case of service-learning or to meet the requirements of graduating as class valedictorian. In the UK, it has been made a condition of the receipt of certain benefits, including disability-related ones. In some high schools in Washington , for example, students must finish hours of community service to get a diploma. Some school districts in Washington, including Seattle Public Schools , differentiate between community service and "service learning," requiring students to demonstrate that their work has contributed to their education. Whether American public schools could require volunteer hours for high school graduation was challenged in *Immediato v. Rye Neck School District* , but the court found no violation. Many other high schools do not require community service hours for graduation, but still see an impressive number of students get involved in their community. Colleges[edit] Though not technically considered a requirement, many colleges include community service as an unofficial requirement for acceptance. However, some colleges prefer work experience over community service, and some require that their students also continue community service for some specific number of hours to graduate. Some academic honor societies, along with some fraternities and sororities in North America , require community service to join and others require each member to continue doing community service. Many student organizations exist for the purpose of community service, the largest of which is Alpha Phi Omega. Community service projects are also done by sororities and fraternities. Beginning in the s, colleges began using service-learning as a pedagogy. A partnership of college presidents began in with the initiative of boosting community service in their colleges. This alliance called Campus Compact, [4] led the way for many other schools to adopt service-learning courses and activities. A typical service-learning course, however, has these factors in common: This can take many forms, including journals, blogs, and discussions. Service-learning courses present learning the material in context, meaning that students often learn effectively and tend to apply what was learned. Community service learning strives to connect or re-connect students with serving their community after they finish their course. To gain the most from community service requires balancing learning with serving. It improves their overall experience and application opportunities they gain from it. By adding service to learning, and balancing the two, community service can become more than just the simple act of serving. It takes small steps to create big change and this is what service-learning hopes to achieve. By being a classroom, a hands-on learning experience, and an opportunity to change the community, people are able to not only serve, but impact themselves as well. Community Service-Learning definition[edit] For community service-learning to be properly applied and understood, one must start with a good definition of service-learning. It is a form of experiential education aimed at enhancing and enriching student learning in course material. When compared to other forms of experiential learning like internships and cooperative education, it is similar in that it is student-centered, hands-on and directly applicable to the curriculum. In other words, service-learning aims to link the personal and interpersonal development with cognitive development, as well as equipping the student with critical knowledge to help them understand the world. Service learning includes student leadership, reflective and academic components, and chances for celebration once the service activity has been successfully completed. Students reflect on community needs, ways to help, and once their service has been completed, they can internalise how their efforts have helped, while learning more about academics such as geography, math, or

science. For instance, a fine may be reduced in exchange for a prescribed number of hours of community service. The court may allow the defendant to choose their community service, which must then be documented by "credible agencies," such as non-profit organizations, or may mandate a specific service. Also, a sentence allowing for a broader choice may prohibit certain services that the offender would reasonably be expected to perform anyway; for example, a convicted lawyer might be specifically prohibited from counting pro bono legal service.

Corporate social responsibility[edit] Some employers involve their staff in some kind of community service programming, such as with the United Way of America. This may be completely voluntary or a condition of employment, or anything in between. In Europe and Australia , community service is an option for many criminal sentences as an alternative to incarceration. In the United Kingdom , community service is now officially referred to by the Home Office as more straightforward compulsory unpaid work. Starting in , Danish High School students receive a special diploma if they complete at least 20 hours of voluntary work.

Her tasks compiled of planning ahead at what needed to be different and how she was going to attempt to change things for the better, acting upon the ideas she came up with, and finally leaving behind a notebook of ideas and recommendations to help the next generation prevent the same disaster of extremely high death rates from happening again. Not only did she organize fundraisers to raise money for the hospital and arrange more stable living conditions to improve the health of the soldiers in the hospital, but she also removed people who were lapsed at their job and delegated tasks to more capable people, sometimes having to do the work herself. She grew up with the desire to help people or anything that needed a hand. Her love for aid and service to others grew when she got older and despite her lack of support from her family she pursued her dream and sacrificed her life for other people. From volunteering to participating in such charity events like walks or runs, institutes continue the practice or requiring their employees or students to grow in camaraderie while giving back to various communities. Many institutions also provide opportunities for employees and students to work together, and most student groups participate in their own form of community service. Each is unique in its own right; all are incredibly popular with employees; and in all of these programs, human resources plays an integral role. One example is East Carolina University , which gives 24 hours of community service leave for full-time employees per year as an incentive and compensation for community service. These groups and churches reach out by holding Vacation Bible Schools for children, hosting Red Cross blood drives, having fall carnivals, or offering free meals. Through these services, churches are able to benefit neighborhoods and families. Some churches create non-profit organizations that can help the public. Crisis pregnancy centers are often run by religious groups to promote pro-life values in local families. Also, certain churches provide day care so that busy parents can work.

Christian service[edit] Christianity , the foundation of thousands of service organizations, holds many strong beliefs about community service. According to the Christian Bible, 1 Peter 4: If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Christianity teaches that Jesus was a perfect example of serving during His time on earth. Jesus Christ healed the sick, fed thousands of people, and died for all mankind. In addition, Christian belief states that they hold dual-citizenship, both in the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of earth. This means that they should be invested in both kingdoms, and everything they do should incorporate this line of thinking. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. This adds meaning to everything that they do and say in the service of others. Booth was a Methodist minister and preacher on the streets of London. His tent meetings gathered crowds of drunkards, prostitutes and thieves [24] who eventually became the first "soldiers" in the army, which has grown to 1,, members in countries. Habitat for Humanity provides housing for people in need. Founded by Millard Fuller , its vision is to " Some participants of a community service project may find themselves gaining a greater understanding of their roles in the community, as well as the impact of their contributions towards those in need of service. Because community service outlets vary, those who serve are exposed to many different kinds of people, environments, and situations. Participants may also internalize the information that they found personally insightful for future

use. While simply performing community service is valuable to the recipients, those serving often find it beneficial to pause and reflect on how they are changing society for the better. Schools often take students on community service projects so they can learn how their individual actions affect the well-being of the public. Participants may find that serving the public fosters a more solidified view of self and purpose. Eventually, the skills and knowledge obtained while working with the community may be applied in future areas of work. Because most community service opportunities allow others to interact and work with other individuals, this service may help volunteers network and connect with others towards a common goal. This direct contact allows people to see life from a different perspective and reevaluate their opinions of others. Many young people who get involved in community service come out with a more well-rounded worldview. Another benefit in participating in community service is a greater understanding and appreciation for diversity. Appreciating other cultures and breaking down stereotypes is important to becoming a responsible citizen and better person. By participating in a community service project where interaction is required, personal relationships can begin to grow. These personal relationships help people have informal and consistent interactions that through time, often breakdown negative stereotypes. These relationships can also facilitate more opinions and viewpoints surrounding various topics that help participants to grow in diversity. These judgments move into a biased opinion when you believe that these judgments are always true. Community Service helps people to realize that everyone does not fall into these preconceived ideas. Along with breaking down stereotypes, community service work can assist people in realizing that those they are helping and working with are no different from themselves. Learning to understand the needs and motivations of others, especially those who live different lives from our own, is an important part of living a productive life. This leads to a view of humanity that can help a person stay free of biased opinions of others and can lead to a more diverse and ultimately more productive and thought provoking life. Civilians have a unique desire and aptitude to organize themselves apart from government to address the needs in their communities. However, making sure an effort has a positive effect on society requires clear analysis and a strategy. Analysis identifies root causes of problems that project implementation must address. Individuals, like neighborhoods, enjoy permanent change only if it is an inner one—”and the greatest form of community service is encouraging that inner change. He champions the right of every community to operate its own organizations and manage its own groups, with the foundational belief that parents know what their child really needs, and that local people are more capable of helping fellow locals. Those who agree with his views perceive community service as a "trampoline" that seeks to launch their targets to better employment and lifestyle, avoiding what they see as destructive decision making for mal-established goals by poorly developed community service efforts. Making them a part of the movement, change or project creates in the members of the community a sense of belonging and hope.

Chapter 6 : Home : Communities In Schools

Learning communities align their goals with those of the school and school system, engage in continuous professional learning, and hold all members collectively accountable for results. The professional learning that occurs within learning communities both supports and is supported by policy and governance, curriculum and instruction, human.

These high schools were the pride of their communities “ and they can be again Oct 4, 4: Through much of the last century, it served as a driver of individual mobility, economic growth, and social cohesion. The provision of universal public high schooling provided an avenue of advancement for families of modest means and over time, impoverished and discriminated communities. In many areas, students from the wealthy and poor sides of town sat side by side in classrooms and experienced the rituals of high school together. Today, however, in the places that need them the most “ locales that have been unable to make the pivot from the 20th to 21st century economy “ there are too many high schools no longer fulfilling that promise. After more than a decade of progress in improving high school graduation rates, there remain about 1, traditional high schools in need of serious improvement and redesign. From the inner city to the heartland of America, these low-performing high schools are concentrated in struggling communities that sit at the fault lines of race, class, and inequality in America. Families who are succeeding in the 21st century live in a different educational nation than those who are not. Left unattended, these schools will lead to a persistent, geographically bound, underclass with implications for our society, economy and democracy. In many ways this is an invisible problem, even as it flames the more noticeable challenges of violence, the opioid epidemic and rising rates of suicide. Families and voters who are succeeding in the 21st century and the public officials who represent them live in a different educational nation than those who are not. In the first such nation, the vast majority of high schools have an average graduation rate of 90 percent or higher and dropping out is a rarity. The push and focus are getting kids into college and the workforce. In the second educational nation, the average on-time graduation rate for students trapped in struggling high schools is only 49 percent and success in college an unrealized dream for nearly all. Yet, many of these low-performing high schools also have a proud history that exemplifies the best of their communities and continue to generate a shared sense of attachment among their residents. Together with lessons learned over the last decade on how to improve high schools, this connection to community provides the means to redesign these high schools to once again become engines of advancement and community integration in the locales most in need. So how can this be done? We need an initial focus on the approximately traditional high schools that will be identified this October as graduating 67 percent or fewer of their students under the Every Student Succeeds Act ESSA. The good news is that ESSA not only requires States to identify and have evidence-based plans to reform these schools, but also provides historic levels of resources to support such reinvention. At the same time, the evidence base for what works in high school reform has grown considerably in the last twenty years and should be used to provide a solid foundation for local innovation. Focus must also be given to the development of the whole child “ with school climates and classrooms that foster the social, emotional and academic dimensions of learning. The evidence is overwhelming that such integration boosts student outcomes, from attendance to graduation to college and workforce success. And surveys show that principals, teachers and the students themselves want such a focus on their complete development. America stepped up to its high school dropout challenge with impressive results. Now is the time for a second act to ensure all students have an equal shot. Similarly, the high school redesign should be centered on helping the whole community. In many struggling communities, the local high school is the sole institution still connected to the community, and the energy and passions of their youth their greatest untapped asset. As such, redesign efforts should explicitly aim to support economic growth and social cohesion. They can serve as sites for business incubation and multi-generational job training. Businesses and nonprofits serving youth also have critical roles to play in making learning more inspiring, relevant to workforce opportunities, and supportive of student and community needs. States can play a key role in networking similarly situated schools to learn about success and failure on the road to improvement. There are many examples of success “ from Tacoma and Fresno to

Austin and Cleveland “where communities with low-performing schools made significant and sustained progress that have driven increases in high school graduation rates. They can share hard lessons of challenge and hope. America stepped up to its high school dropout challenge over the last decade with impressive results. Now is the time for a second act to ensure all students, regardless of background, have an equal shot at the dream. And in the process, we can lift up and bring hope to the communities on the edge of breaking apart. The average on-time graduation rate for students trapped in struggling high schools is only 49 percent and success in college an unrealized dream for nearly all, write the authors.

Chapter 7 : What Is a Professional Learning Community? - Educational Leadership

Communities In Schools of Chicago will partner with of the city's public schools during the academic year. CIS of Chicago will link all of these schools to a range of prevention and enrichment programs to address the social, emotional and physical health needs of children at these schools.

When one thinks systemically than one recognizes that you can not change one thing in a system without it affecting everything else. We, at Global Learning Communities, have helped schools who are re-creating themselves into collaborative learning communities to apply the above principles of living systems throughout their school re-creation efforts. We also help schools by providing the following conceptual framework to be used in planning the components of school change. In order to develop the school as a collaborative learning community, the entire staff community needs to have a common vision and agreed upon outcomes for student learning and performance. This is a necessary starting point for school re-creation - what is education for? Changing the structures and policies in schools need to be addressed after the teachers have worked on refining and aligning classroom practice. There have been many schools in the past few years who have changed the daily schedule to allow teacher teaming and planning, only to find that teachers did not take advantage of the changed procedure because the staff had not built their own collegiality or had not changed their classroom practices to warrant the change in timetable. Just as a cooperative structure in cooperative learning does not make a collaborative classroom, so too, only changing the structure in a school will not make a collaborative school without a culture and collegial environment that supports it. Therefore, begin with the end in mind by establishing common vision and outcomes, then work to refine classroom practice and staff collegiality. Over the past few years there have been many improvements in curriculum, effective teaching and learning strategies and assessment procedures. What is now needed in most schools is an alignment of these practices. We have cooperative learning teachers whose environment in the classroom is still very teacher-directed, rather than student-centered. We have cooperative learning teachers who are using cooperative learning with a fact-based curriculum, rather than its most appropriate use for conceptual-based curriculum. We have teachers teaching fragmented bits of the curriculum, rather than through an integrated, meaning-based approach. We have teachers using conceptual-based, constructivist curriculum with only paper-pencil test assessments, rather than having their students performing their learning. In a collaborative learning community, the classroom environment, the curriculum, effective teaching and learning strategies, and assessment procedures are aligned and reflect a core philosophy and values about teaching and learning. Educators cannot change who they teach, what they teach, how they teach and how they assess what they teach without opportunities to work together. In addition, each person involved in schools needs to see themselves as continuous learners modelling the love of learning and life-long learning practices they desire for their students. We cannot re-create schools as collaborative learning communities without sustained professional development and dialogue. We must have time to reflect on our craft. This simply means that we will never achieve our goals without sustained professional development and collaborative reflection practices, such as action research, coaching, mentoring, etc. Another aspect of seeing ourselves as teachers and learners in this constant process of change is accountability. Like our students, every educator in the system must grow and learn. If students are keeping journals and learning logs, why are the educators? We know what facilitates good learning and we need to apply it to ourselves, if we truly are to become a self-renewing learning organization. Changes in the schedule, changes in staffing roles, changes in student programs and opportunities, changes in teacher reconfigurations and changes in policy and procedures come once we have a clearer idea of what is specifically needed at our school. This inside-out strategy requires a considerable amount of searching and reflection as teachers struggle with such issues as who they are, what they hope to become for the students they serve, and how they will decide, organize, teach, learn and live together. They, then, try to work too late for "buy-in". Partnership is not about "buy-in"; it is about authentic involvement, participation, shared leadership and shared decision-making. Involving key people from "outside" the school is essential to establishing your school as a collaborative learning community. Students are learning as much in

the community, in the media and in their homes as they are in schools. We must be partners in facilitating learning. Students also need opportunities to utilize their learning in the community through internships, community service, establishing enterprises themselves and through participating in community-based learning lessons. Schools cannot do it alone, as the African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child". Collaborative learning communities work to make this a reality, not rhetoric. When we think systemically, one can not change one element of these components of school change without changing another. Change is not linear; it is cyclical. To move to become more of a collaborative learning community, we plan in each arena simultaneously. For a collaborative learning community has: Like the tidal waves that clear island reefs and create opportunities for new, stronger and more appropriate growth, so the wave of transformation is pervading the portals of our schools. The words collaborative learning communities are now bandied around with great aplomb in meetings, classrooms and in policy and curriculum documents. We need to use this opportunity to really examine what we think education is, what we see as desired outcomes for students and how we think learning is facilitated. We need to construct our own meaning, in our own context, of a collaborative learning community. Yet, this we know, it is not a checklist of factors, it a mindset as much as a map. It is a philosophy as much as a place. It is the essence of what this magazine and association has always stood for the synergy of collaboration, learning and community. It is taking responsibility for our craft, our own development and that of our students; it is ensuring our future. Guide to Ecoliteracy Berkeley, CA: What is It and How do We do It? Center for the Study of Community, Cooper, Carole and Boyd, Julie. Global Learning Communities, Cooper, Carole and Henderson, Nan. Motivating Schools to Change: Integrating the Threads of School Restructuring. Global Learning Communities, In Print. The Role of the Teacher in the 21st Century. National Educational Service, Team Building for School Change: Equipping Teachers for New Roles. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. Finding Support and Connection in a Fragmented World. Global Learning Communities International Office:

Chapter 8 : Learning Communities

Thus the communities that students form in school cannot be isolated from the many other communities in which they participate; the school is a viable community for students only to the extent that it supports their participation in other communities as well.

Eric Schaps Building a strong sense of community in schools is both important and doable. Imagine that you are a student entering a new school for the first time. What would be on your mind? Will I be popular? Will they care about me? Will I be smart enough? Will I be teased, shunned, humiliated? These fundamental needs shape human motivation and have major implications for learning and development. And by enlisting students in maintaining that sense of community, the school provides opportunities for students to learn skills and develop habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. A growing body of research confirms the benefits of building a sense of community in school. These benefits are often lasting. Researchers have found that the positive effects of certain community-building programs for elementary schools persist through middle and high school. Schools can readily assess the degree to which students experience community in school by asking students how much they agree or disagree with such statements as My class is like a family. Students in my class help one another learn. I believe that I can talk to the teachers in this school about things that are bothering me. Students in my class can get a rule changed if they think that it is unfair. Unfortunately, schools with a strong sense of community are fairly rare. Of further concern is the fact that low-income students and students of color usually report a lower level of community in school than do affluent or white students. Four approaches are particularly beneficial. Actively cultivate respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents. Supportive relationships are the heart of community. They enable students from diverse backgrounds to bring their personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences into the classroom. Emphasize common purposes and ideals. Along with academic achievement, schools with a strong sense of community stress the development of qualities essential to good character and citizenship, such as fairness, concern for others, and personal responsibility. Provide regular opportunities for service and cooperation. Students learn the skills of collaboration, develop wider and richer relationships, and experience the many satisfactions of contributing to the welfare of others. Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and influence. Having a say in establishing the agenda and climate for the classroom is intrinsically satisfying and helps prepare students for the complexities of citizenship in a democracy. Several leading program developers have focused on using one or more of these approaches to build community. The Child Development Project, for example, focuses on the regular use of several key activities: Class meetings are useful for setting goals and norms, planning activities, and identifying and solving problems. They are essential for building peer relationships and fostering shared goals in the classroom. A buddies program pairs whole classes of older and younger students for academic and recreational activities. Every older student gets a younger buddy for the year. They get acquainted by interviewing each other, charting ways in which they are alike and different, and sharing their classroom portfolios. During the year, they may read or play math games together, visit museums, work together for a cause, or create a joint journal of their activities. Buddies programs help create powerful cross-age relationships, teach important social skills, and create a caring ethos in the school. These conversations, mostly interviews conducted by students with their parents, link school learning with home experiences and perspectives. For 4th grade state history units, for example, students interview their parents about how their family or ancestors first came to their state. Whether family members have lived in the state for years or days, the story of how and why they came to settle there is part of state history and serves to personalize learning for students. Schoolwide community-building activities link students, parents, and teachers; help foster new school traditions; and promote helpfulness, inclusiveness, and responsibility. They can be as undemanding as Family Film Nights, invitations to the entire family to view a feature-length movie at school and perhaps discuss a question related to it within the family. Or the activities can be as challenging as creating a Family Heritage Museum, for which students and their caregivers prepare displays of information and artifacts that tell something about their family heritage. The school then features the displays for a week or

two and organizes an evening event so that parents and children can view them together. Some of themâ€”class meetings, especiallyâ€”may involve new skills that teachers need to learn through additional staff development. Other activities require little or no additional training for implementation. Make Community a Priority U. Community building should becomeâ€”at a minimumâ€”a strong complement to the prevailing focus on academic achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, â€” The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, , â€” Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Preventing adolescent health-risk behaviors by strengthening protection during childhood. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, , â€” Protecting adolescents from harm: Journal of the American Medical Association, , â€” School as a caring community: A key to character education. University of Chicago Press. A six-district study of educational change: Direct and mediated effects of the Child Development Project. *Social Psychology of Education*, 4, 3â€” An intervention program and its effects. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 27, â€”

Chapter 9 : Community service - Wikipedia

Communities In Schools (CIS), the national organization dedicated to empowering at-risk students to stay in school and on a path to a brighter future, is delighted to welcome NBA Hall of Famer, Shaquille O'Neal as the newest member of its national board of directors.

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment. Professional learning within communities requires continuous improvement, promotes collective responsibility, and supports alignment of individual, team, school, and school system goals. Learning communities convene regularly and frequently during the workday to engage in collaborative professional learning to strengthen their practice and increase student results. Learning community members are accountable to one another to achieve the shared goals of the school and school system and work in transparent, authentic settings that support their improvement. Shirley Hord, scholar laureate, talks about the Learning Communities standard. Engage in Continuous Improvement Learning communities apply a cycle of continuous improvement to engage in inquiry, action research, data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation. Characteristics of each application of the cycle of continuous improvement are:

Develop Collective Responsibility Learning communities share collective responsibility for the learning of all students within the school or school system. Collective responsibility brings together the entire education community, including members of the education workforce -- teachers, support staff, school system staff, and administrators -- as well as families, policy makers, and other stakeholders, to increase effective teaching in every classroom. Within learning communities, peer accountability rather than formal or administrative accountability ignites commitment to professional learning. Every student benefits from the strengths and expertise of every educator when communities of educators learn together and are supported by local communities whose members value education for all students. Collective participation advances the goals of a whole school or team as well as those of individuals. Communities of caring, analytic, reflective, and inquiring educators collaborate to learn what is necessary to increase student learning. Learning community members strive to refine their collaboration, communication, and relationship skills to work within and across both internal and external systems to support student learning. They develop norms of collaboration and relational trust and employ processes and structures that unleash expertise and strengthen capacity to analyze, plan, implement, support, and evaluate their practice. Collective responsibility and participation foster peer-to-peer support for learning and maintain a consistent focus on shared goals within and across communities. Technology facilitates and expands community interaction, learning, resource archiving and sharing, and knowledge construction and sharing. Some educators may meet with peers virtually in local or global communities to focus on individual, team, school, or school system improvement goals. Communities of learners may be various sizes, include members with similar or different roles or responsibilities, and meet frequently face-to-face, virtually, or through a combination. Educators may be members of multiple learning communities. Some communities may include members who share common students, areas of responsibility, roles, interests, or goals. Learning communities tap internal and external expertise and resources to strengthen practice and student learning. Because the education system reaches out to include students, their families, community members, the education workforce, and public officials who share responsibility for student achievement, some learning communities may include representatives of these groups.

Create Alignment and Accountability Professional learning that occurs within learning communities provides an ongoing system of support for continuous improvement and implementation of school and systemwide initiatives. To avoid fragmentation among learning communities and to strengthen their contribution to school and system goals, public officials and school system leaders create policies that establish formal accountability for results along with the support needed to achieve results. To be effective, these policies and supports align with an explicit vision and goals for successful learning communities. Learning communities align their goals with those of the school and school system, engage in continuous professional learning, and hold all members collectively

accountable for results. The professional learning that occurs within learning communities both supports and is supported by policy and governance, curriculum and instruction, human resources, and other functions within a school system. Learning communities bridge the knowing-doing gap by transforming macro-level learning -- knowledge and skill development -- into micro-level learning -- the practices and refinements necessary for full implementation in the classroom or workplace. When professional learning occurs within a system driven by high expectations, shared goals, professionalism, and peer accountability, the outcome is deep change for individuals and systems. Related Research Bolam, R. Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities Research Brief RB Department for Education and Skills. Learning together, leading together: Changing schools through professional learning communities. Teachers in professional communities: Improving teaching and learning. Professional communities and the work of high school teaching. University of Chicago Press. Increasing achievement by focusing grade-level teams on improving classroom learning: A prospective, quasiexperimental study of Title I schools. American Educational Research Journal, 46 4 , With support from Read the JSD! Featured Practitioner "We had one or two resisters at first, but it boiled down to having a conversation about how this strategy would be effective for students in their classroom.