Lawrence W. Lezotte, Ph.D.
National Education Consultant

Nominated by
V. Sue Cleveland

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Lawrence W. Lezotte has devoted his career to helping schools educate *all* students.

In July 1966, "The Equal Educational Opportunity Survey" by J.S. Coleman, et al, was published. The Coleman report concluded that family background, not the school, was the major determinant of student achievement. Coleman was foremost among a group of social scientists who, during the 1960s and 70s, believed that family factors such as poverty or a parent's lack of education prevented children from learning regardless of the method of instruction. Not all educators agreed with the Coleman findings. In fact, the report stimulated a vigorous reaction, inspiring researchers—Dr. Lezotte among them—to find those schools that were successful in educating all students regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic background.

And find them, they did. Successful schools were found in all settings: urban, rural, and suburban. They found schools with high proportions of poor and minority students who attained high levels of achievement. Through their research, Dr. Lezotte and his colleagues, Ron Edmonds and Wilbur Brookover, were able to identify the characteristics of effective schools— schools where all students learn. These common characteristics have come to be known as the Correlates of Effective Schools. These correlates are now widely accepted as a framework for school improvement, and are among the basic tenets of federal and state mandates for education reform.

Today, Dr. Lezotte is known as the preeminent spokesperson for continuous school improvement based on effective schools research. As a consultant, he touches the lives of thousands of educators and tens of thousands of students each year through workshops and conferences around the country, making the connection between federal and state mandates for school reform and the new mission of "learning for all." Dr. Lezotte's training programs not only inspire schools and districts to adopt the "learning for all" mission, but give them the information and tools they need to plan and implement continuous school improvement and raise student achievement. In recognition of his efforts, Dr. Lezotte received the 2003 Council of Chief State School Officers' Distinguished Service Award presented each year to outstanding Americans who have made a difference in education.

In addition to his consulting activities, Dr. Lezotte has written widely on continuous school improvement. His writings include:
Stepping Up: Leading the Charge to Improve Our Schools
Implementation Guide - Assembly Required: A Continuous School Improvement System
Assembly Required: A Continuous School Improvement System
Learning for All
The Effective Schools Process: A Proven Path to Learning for All
Creating the Total Quality Effective School
Sustainable School Reform: The District Context.

Dr. Lezotte has published *The Correlate Book Series*, a collection of monographs on the Correlates of Effective Schools. Titles in this series include:
Instructional Leadership, Safe and Orderly Environment, Positive Home-School Relations, High Expectations, and *Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress.*

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2009 Brock International Prize in Education
Nomination of Lawrence W. Lezotte, Ph.D.
August 1, 2008

It is an honor and pleasure to nominate Lawrence W. (Larry) Lezotte, Ph.D. for the 2009 Brock International Prize in Education. Dr. Lezotte is a nationally renowned speaker and author—an individual who has been at the forefront of educational research since 1969. Dr. Lezotte has a B.S. from Western Michigan University in History, Psychology, and Education; a M.A. from Western Michigan University in Experimental Psychology, and a Ph.D. from Michigan State University in Educational Psychology, Statistics, and Research Design. He began his university career at Michigan State in East Lansing in 1969. He held varied and increasingly responsible positions during his twenty year tenure with the university, leaving in 1989 to assume the position of Chief Executive Officer and National Education Consultant for Effective Schools Products, Ltd.

During Dr. Lezotte's tenure as a university professor, administrator, and consultant, he has had a profound impact on public education. He has produced more than fifty publications and has presented at numerous conferences and workshops throughout the United States and abroad. There are many outstanding educators and researchers who have contributed to our knowledge and understanding of best practices and who have fostered a sense of urgency about the need improve outcomes for students. However, I believe special credit should be given to Dr. Lezotte for having been at the forefront of this effort for almost forty years. In 2003, Dr. Lezotte was awarded the Council of Chief State School Officers Distinguished Service Award for his enduring contributions to school reform and for making Learning for All an educational priority.

While his research has covered numerous topics and issues, Dr. Lezotte was one of first researchers who sought to identify schools having high levels of performance for all students, regardless of geography, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. The Effective Schools research ultimately resulted in the development of a framework that provides technical assistance to schools and districts as they shifted their efforts from access/compulsory attendance issues to compulsory learning. Dr. Lezotte notes:

- The standards, assessment, and accountability movement has changed both the mission and expectations of public education
- Existing schools and classroom systems must also change if they have any hope of meeting the needs of all students
- Whenever the aim or function of a system changes, its form must also change.
- The current system of public education was never designed or even intended to successfully teach all students to a proficient standard.

In 1966, "The Equal Educational Opportunity Survey," by J.S. Coleman, et al was released. The Coleman report found that family background was the major determiner of student achievement—a rather fatalistic view that schools made very little difference in the academic success and personal lives of students. If educators believed that the causes of student learning lie outside their spheres of influence, then perhaps the efforts to improve teaching and learning were futile.

Several researchers, including Dr. Lezotte, believed that schools could and were making a difference. They set out to find those schools and to identify the characteristics responsible for their success. Those common characteristics became the Correlates of Effective Schools and ultimately, were translated into a framework for school reform and a foundation continuous improvement. While this body of research has certainly been expanded and refined over thirty years, the basic tenets are as applicable today as they were thirty-plus years ago.

The Correlates of Effective Schools are:
- Clear and focused mission
  - o Urgency regarding Learning for All
- Strong instructional leadership
- Safe and orderly environment
- Climate of high expectations for all
- Opportunity to learn and student time on task/learning
- Frequent monitoring of student progress
- Positive home school relationships

While forthright about the challenges facing public education, Dr. Lezotte's message focused on the belief that sufficient knowledge and skills currently exist for educators to make a significant and measureable difference. However, educators must to be guided by strong core values as opposed to instructional fads and good intentions.

Larry Lezotte has been instrumental in creating a paradigm shift by raising the right questions about the strategic assumptions educators need to address in order to make Learning for All a reality. Dr. Lezotte stated, "The system-in-place was never designed or even intended to successfully teach all—or even the vast majority—of students a high standard curriculum." Districts, schools, and classrooms were organized perfectly to get the results they were getting, but these results no longer met the needs and expectations of students. He stated, "Even the highest performing middle schools and high schools in the United States had at least 25-30% of their students failing to meet grade level standards"—which obviously has long-term implications for our political, economic, and social systems.

Larry Lezotte has produced a rich legacy of publications, media, and other materials over a thirty-nine-year time span to assist in the "Journey Ahead." The Effective Schools Products, Ltd. provides an extensive library of books, kits, DVDs, power points, and other resources to provide technical assistance to school leaders as they attempt to initiate and successfully deploy best practices in their districts, schools, and classrooms. *Assembly Required: A Continuous School Improvement System* and its companion book, *Implementation Guide—Assembly Required: A Continuous School Improvement System* by Lawrence Lezotte and Kathleen McKee addresses how to implement change with the fidelity needed to insure success. From personal experience, *SteppingUp: Leading the Charge to Improve our Schools* by Lezotte and McKee was an inspirational and informative book which assists school leaders through the difficult, painful, and sometimes politically volatile process of achieving meaningful school reform.

In addition to media and printed materials, Dr. Lezotte works directly with teachers, administrators, and superintendents in the United States, as well as in other countries, by providing quality professional-growth opportunities such as annual institutes for principals and superintendents, conferences for teachers, keynotes, and site-based support at the school, district, and state levels. He is one of those special researchers who can effectively translate research into practice.

Peer review and evaluation is another factor in considering nominees for the Brock Award. When reviewing the research of other major researchers, Larry Lezotte's work is frequently referenced. For example, *On Common Ground: The Power of Professional Learning Communities* edited by Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Rebecca Du Four, "More Effective Schools: Professional Learning Communities in Action," includes a chapter authored by Lawrence Lezotte in which he explains " how the Professional Learning Community concept supports rather than supplants decades of research on effective schools." In "Successful Schools: From Research to Action Plans,"
Willard Daggett lists *Effective Schools—Only You Can Make A Difference*, by Lawrence W. Lezotte, Robert D. Skaife, and Michael D. Holstead, as one his seven "meta-analyses" that has a strong research and defensible research base needed to address the"scientific research" required by *No Child Left Behind.*

Lawrence Lezotte has produced significant legacy of research for almost forty years, he is recognized by others in the field as significant contributor, he has made an impact throughout the United States and abroad, and he has produced a considerable legacy of professional publications, media, and other materials. Most importantly, Dr. Lezotte helped to change how educators, parents, and others perceived the potential and urgency of school reform. His work has underscored our moral and ethical obligation to address the needs of All Students as indicated by the following quote: "We must pursue our mission of 'learning for all' not because it is politically expedient, but because there is no such thing as an expendable child." I believe he is uniquely qualified to obtain this special recognition and it is an honor to nominate him for this award.

Resume
Lawrence W. Lezotte, Ph.D.

I.   Present Position

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II.   Previous Positions

1987-1989   Director, National Center for Effective Schools
Research and Development, Okemos, Michigan
1985-1987   Professor of Educational Administration & Director,
Center for Effective Schools Research, College of Education*
1983-1987   Director, Ron Edmonds School Improvement Summer Institute, College of
Education*
1983-1985   Chair, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education*
1981-1983   Professor, Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, College
of Education*
1979-1981   Associate Director, Communications and Dissemination,
Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education*
1976-1979 Project Manager, Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education*
1976-1977 Coordinator, Research Development and Graduate Program Planning, College
of Urban Development*
1974-1976 Department Chairperson, Urban and Metropolitan Studies*
1972-1974 Associate Professor, Urban and Metropolitan Studies and Educational
Psychology and Adjunct Associate Professor, Office of Instructional
Research*
1969-1972   Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology and Assistant Director for
Research, Center for Urban Affairs*

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III.   Publications

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Learning for All

by
Lawrence W. Lezotte

Setting a New Mission

A bold new mission for public education is well within our reach, if we are willing to work hard to achieve it: Learning for All—Whatever it Takes!

Under this vision, <u>compulsory schooling</u> is transformed into <u>compulsory learning</u>. The system in place is changed to reflect the new mission. A strong commitment is made to extensive staff development. Targeted high-yield improvements are indentified and implemented by a school leadership team, resulting in major gains in student achievement.

Does it sound like an impossible dream, years away from reality? On the contrary, it is not only achievable, it is already available to us! The knowledge base is there. Now we must use it wisely to guide the change process.

In order to embrace the new mission, we must believe in the following assumptions:

- All children can learn and come to school motivated to do so. This belief does not imply that all children can learn at the same rate, nor do they enter the system with the same levels of readiness. Maybe the teacher needs to change the what, the when, or the how. Once the new mission is accepted, then any and all such changes are possible.

- A single school, as a system, can control enough of the variables to assure that virtually all students do learn. The distinguished educational researcher Robert Gagne said that the essential task of the teacher is to arrange the conditions of the learner's environment so that the process of learning will be activated, supported, enhanced, and maintained.

- The internal and external stakeholders to the individual school are the most qualified and capable people to plan and implement the changes necessary for the school to make progress toward the **Learning for All— Whatever it Takes** mission

- Teachers and administrators are already doing the best they can, given the conditions. To change the outputs of the system in place, new knowledge must be embraced, along with the conditions in which you find yourself.

- School-by-school change is the best hope for reforming the schools. However, changes at the school level, if they are going to be sustained,

require that district-level administrators and staff from agencies beyond the school district also be committed to the new mission and dedicated to doing whatever they can to support the schools. If we want schools to be more dedicated to the new mission as judged by student performance, we are going to have to allow processes to vary from classroom to classroom and school to school in order to get the desired results.

The lessons from successful restructuring in the private and public sectors are clear. There must be broad-based commitment to the training and re-training of the workforce.

Crafting a New System

In *The New Economics For Industry, Government, Education*, W. Edward Deming defined and described a system as "a network of interdependent components that work together to try to accomplish the aim of the system."[1] He noted that, if the system is not managed effectively, the individual components become selfish, competitive, and independent. He also cautioned that the aim of a system must never be defined in terms of activities, methods, or programs. Finally, he stated that, regardless of where it starts, if a system is going to be effective, a pervasive sense of mission must come to characterize the organization and must extend throughout the organization.

While most schools and districts have mission statements, few can be described as having a pervasive sense of mission. Today's schools are caught in a constant tension between competing goals, and that makes it very difficult to make sure that all the components of the system, and the individuals who work in the system, keep their eye on the primary aim of the system. Local schools are expected to serve as institutions of custodial care; they are supposed to sort and select students; and, finally, they are designed to be institutions of teaching and learning.

All these different and even competing missions can be metaphorically riding the bus to continuous school improvement. But only one of the missions can drive the bus! The **Learning For All—Whatever it Takes** mission must be the primary aim of the system.

Once the new system is in place, the possibilities are limitless! With computers and other communication technologies currently available, there is no reason why school superintendents shouldn't be able to manage the learning mission with the same level of precision with which they currently manage the money. If the system is doing what is needed, it should be possible for a superintendent to use a computer to track an up-to-date student performance record, and tell the student's parents how well their student is doing, relative to the mastery of the district's intended curriculum.

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[1] W. Edwards Deming, *The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Engineering Study, 1993), p. 50.

If the superintendent can do this, for any student at any time, she would be able to do the same thing for any aggregation of students, large or small. Likewise, anyone between the superintendent and the student, with a legitimate reason to do so, could also access the learning system. The school principal could monitor learning for individual or groups of students in the school. The teacher could constantly monitor his students. The school-to-work coordinator or the director of the science curriculum for the district could also monitor the mission for the affected students or curricular areas.

Using High-Yield Strategies

While technology can help manage the new mission, schools will need to use high-yield strategies to support it. A high-yield strategy is defined as a research-based concept or principle, supported by case literature, that will, when successfully applied in a real school setting, result in significant improvement in assessed student achievement. High-yield improvement strategies tend to be those that impact the classroom and school in such a way that they produce changes in the transactions and interactions between the teacher and students or among students. *Focusing on just two or three high-yield strategies will result in significant increases in student achievement.*

Curriculum Alignment

The first and, in some ways, the most significant high-yield strategy is that of curriculum alignment. First; the school must be part of a larger educational system with clear curricular goals. These goals are then translated into a coherent set of leveled and sequenced programs, courses, and instructional units.

Probably the best way to meet this standard is through the process of backward-mapping the curriculum. The process suggests that we begin with the end in mind, like an architect's rendering of a finished home, and then design down. In the end, the scope and sequence should make sense to teachers, and should stand independent of the particular textbooks or other instructional materials currently in use in the school.

The next major step on the journey to curriculum alignment assumes that the teachers in a school can answer this question: "What evidence will the system use to judge whether the students have mastered the essential student learning for that grade or subject?" If teachers are able to answer this question, we are now in a position to address the alignment between the intended curriculum and the assessed curriculum—the one that is used to judge progress on the curricular goals and objectives. The learning system we are developing is predicated on the belief that assessments should be curricular-based and criterion-referenced.

When these assumptions have been met, educators can move forward to meet the following standard: As a teacher, you should be convinced in your head, heart, and gut that, if you teach the intended curriculum and the students learn it, they will perform well on the assessment measures. One of the best kept

secrets in American public education is students do tend to learn those things they are taught!

Student Time on Task

Teachers must make critical decisions many times every day on how best to allocate one of their most precious and finite educational resources—student time on task. In the best of all worlds, the teacher wants to allocate the right amount of time to the right tasks for each student. Perhaps as important as the actual time allocated by the teacher is the teacher's willingness to monitor and adjust the allocated time on task, as indicated by feedback on student learning and student performance.

Most teachers recognize that they are expected to teach far more content than is feasible given the limited time that is available to them. Teachers need the guidance that comes from the various curriculum alignment strategies. If it takes more time for some students to succeed, then we must find more flexible time structures.

Teachers may have made reasonable allocations of time, but if the nature of the tasks is such that students are not focused, then they tend to be easily distracted by any number of things that may be going on in the classroom or school. The genius of good teachers is to develop instructional tasks and student activities that motivate the students, and hold their interest throughout the instruction.

Effective Restructuring

If schools are going to be responsible and accountable for the successful learning of all students, they are going to have to restructure the way they do business. The new systems, structures, and strategies must be based on principles and concepts of learning that have been proven to be effective by research and implemented successfully in real-world classrooms and schools.

There are two principles of effective instruction:

1) Place students at an appropriate level of difficulty, so that they will be appropriately challenged and can succeed. We don't tend to do this because most schools place students on the basis of chronological age. This makes no sense from a student learning point of view, and makes the teacher's job more difficult.

2) Keep students at that appropriate level long enough so that they will succeed. We don't tend to do this either because we place students in age-based groups for the entire school year.

These principles beg for the ungraded, continuous progress, flexibly scheduled instructional system. Such a system would include fluid cross-age achievement groupings that are continuously being changed to provide every student with the opportunity to learn to mastery.

Many elementary and middle schools have successfully begun the journey of systemic reform by restructuring available time, so that teachers have larger

blocks of uninterrupted instructional time with a smaller group of students. Other schools have found success through changing the school calendar and, in some cases, even beginning school at a younger age. Some schools, especially working with concentrated populations of economically disadvantaged students, are offering preschool programs in an attempt to solve learning problems before they occur.

At the high school level, the shift to a student-performance-based, results-oriented system allows educators to free up the instructional process and, ultimately, abandon the fixed seat time Carnegie Unit. The Carnegie Unit model may have served us well when high schools were judged and accreditiated based on the courses available and the time spent in different classes. Now, with the new order of things calling for evidence of results and student performance, the process-oriented measures will no longer be sufficient.

Meaningful Connections

Developing and implementing changes in instructional strategies based on recent brain research and the cognitive sciences represent a particularly promising high-yield strategy. First, the brain research suggests that, for learning and retention to occur, it must be meaningful to the learner in his or her own terms. This means teachers must know the curriculum and their students well enough to know how to present the curriculum so meaningful connections can be made.

Providing advanced organizers for students is another strategy based on the cognitive sciences that is both related to task analysis and tends to assure high-yield increases in student learning and performance. Advanced organizers give the learner a model of what the lesson is all about. When teachers incorporate advanced organizers, student comprehension and retention increases significantly. The inclusion of advanced organizers can take many forms, and will vary from discipline to discipline.

High-Impact Learning

Classrooms that use appropriate and well-tested cooperative or team learning strategies are creating win-win opportunities for all students. Parents of the gifted and talented should insist that teachers use this approach because it helps these youngsters to understand the lesson at a much deeper level. If we believe the wisdom of the adage "you never learn something as well as when you teach it," we ought to insist on cooperative learning experiences for all students.

Similarly, cross-age tutoring has been found to be a useful high-yield instructional strategy. To make it work effectively, teachers in at least two grade levels have to agree to collaborate and coordinate schedules so that the students can get together.

Using computers as an integrated part of the instructional program will make it possible for teachers to individualize instruction. In addition to providing a much richer information base under the control of the learner, computers can

simultaneously simplify classroom management tasks and enhance the learning environment.

This list of high-yield strategies is by no means exhaustive; rather, it is intended to suggest what schools can do if they are willing to dedicate themselves to the new mission and draw upon the existing knowledge base to guide the change process.

Creating Partnerships

The education of a child is much broader than the learning that takes place in the school, even under the best of conditions. Other settings and people, thought of as implicit partners in education, must be made explicit partners, especially for the children of the poor. A critical partnership should exist between the school and parents, but other members of the community can play a valuable role. Grandparents, senior citizens, and other volunteer groups can provide additional help and powerful role models.

School-business partnerships should be broadened. The school should never ask for money; that's too easy for the business. Instead, focus on asking for commitments of time and human energy that will have more of a lasting payoff.

High schools should recruit adults from the community to take classes during the school day. Many small business owners in the community would gladly release their workers and pay tuition for them to take computer courses during the school day. If one percent of the students in a high school during the regular school day were adults on assignment from their place of work, the school climate would change dramatically. Teachers would come to quickly realize that these nontraditional learners are allies in setting and maintaining a positive, safe, and orderly learning climate.

Another approach to creating a seamlessness between school and community is to have significant learning activities actually occurring in the community. This not only validates what the school is teaching, but also gives the students an opportunity to experience those critical workplace skills that so many of our critics say are missing in the children's education today. Every community has some unique ways to get the students to touch their own future, and educators should capitalize on them.

One other partnership strategy receiving a lot of recognition from teachers at all levels of schooling is the student-led parent/teacher conference. This strategy of parent conferences is especially appropriate when the school begins to move toward more authentic assessments and portfolios for monitoring student learning and student achievement. It provides an excellent strategy for teaching presentation skills, goal setting, personal responsibility, and accountability.

Guiding the Leadership Team

The concept of bringing new knowledge and skills to the people in the school will require the commitment and cooperation of all the teachers and administrators in the school. A leadership group consisting of school-level and central office representatives will guide the process.

When the members of the leadership team set the improvement goals and develop the action plans for their implementation, they should be sure that each goal and strategy identifies the need for training and technical assistance, as well as provides models of success and networks of support.

The school leadership team should consider what models of success can provide good illustrations of the kinds of changes called for in the improvement goal. Models of good practice help to lower the levels of resistance that are likely to exist for some staff. Models of success can come in many forms—written materials, video materials, presentations by consultants or expert teachers, or visits to other successful schools.

The school leadership team needs to establish a network of support for all staff relative to the innovation. This network ought to represent a safe and trusting setting where teachers would be encouraged to talk about all aspects of the innovation. When such networks are created, several good outcomes are likely. First, the teacher is likely to learn that he or she is not alone and that itself is reassuring. Second, colleagues may be able to provide advice based on their own experience with the innovation. Third, if teachers provide feedback on what is and is not working, the school leadership team will learn about the systemic problems that were created when the change was introduced in the school and classroom system.

Monitoring and documenting the steps and stages in the implementation of an innovation in a system is critical. The leadership group needs regular and useful feedback at every step throughout the implementation process.

The time has come to take what we know and make a renewed commitment to the American dream. **Learning For All** can happen if we are willing to dedicate ourselves to the new mission.

The Scoutmaster's Dilemma

By Dr. Lawrence W. Lezotte & Kathleen M. McKee

The scoutmaster of Woodchucks Troop 234 is about to take a group of 25 young scouts on an eight-mile hike to a lake for an overnight camping experience next Saturday. He's led this particular hike many times before, but this year the Woodchuck Council has made the event a competition. They have also changed the route to make it more difficult, one that involves hiking through a fairly dense woods and some rocky trail. Troop 234 is scheduled to leave at 10:00 a.m. and arrive at the lake no later than 3:00 p.m. If they don't make it by 3:00 p.m., their group will be disqualified from the competition. The scoutmaster is concerned about getting all the boys to the designated spot on time. Here are some of the facts that cause him concern:

1. *Some of the boys in the group naturally walk fast and others naturally slow.*

2. *Some of the boys are very excited by the idea of the hike and the overnight camping; others are only going because their parents are making them.*

3. *The scoutmaster is virtually certain that each boy is capable of completing the hike, but he is not sure that the young man who's leg is in a cast and is on crutches can get there by 3:00 p.m.*

4. *Some of the boys are more physically fit and will be able to cover greater distances without resting while others will need to rest more frequently.*

5. *While most of the boys are sure to be at the designated trailhead at or before 10:00 a.m., three or four of the boys are likely to be late (their parents are not as responsible as the should be). This means that the group will probably not have the full five hours to cover the eight miles.*

6. *If the scoutmaster places himself at the front of the line in order to set the proper pace, he may leave some of the slower walkers behind. If he sets a slow enough pace to keep all the scouts together, the faster walkers will become disgruntled, discouraged, turn on the slow walkers, and when they get home, probably complain to their parents that hiking is boring.*

7. *If the scoutmaster places himself at the rear of the line to be sure that no scout is left behind, the fast walkers may set too fast a pace, get way out ahead, wander off and get lost, but—technically—not left behind.*

8. *The scoutmaster is responsible for every scout; it really doesn't matter whether a scout is lost because he was left behind or because he wandered off in boredom and frustration. If any scout fails to reach the lake on time, the entire troop fails. If that happens, some parents may get angry and move their children to another troop. In addition, the Woodchuck Council could replace the scoutmaster or even disband the troop entirely.*

Faced with this dilemma, the scoutmaster begins to wonder if he's cut out to lead this troop. He's willing to work hard at the task, but is in a quandary about how to assure that all 25 scouts arrive at the lake by 3:00 p.m.

Our scoutmaster's dilemma is not unlike the challenges educational leaders are facing today. Suddenly, the educational landscape has transformed into something very different from what teachers and administrators have ever known. The element of competition has been injected into public schooling through school of choice. The K-12

route has been made more difficult with higher standards. Educators must now be accountable for seeing that all children master these higher standards, regardless of the differences and disadvantages they bring to the schoolhouse door. And if one subgroup of students fails to meet adequate yearly progress, the entire school is labeled as "needing improvement"—a euphemism for "failing." Further failure results in ever-more-serious sanctions, with parents being able to move their students to other schools and the possible removal of the principal. Yes, the world has changed dramatically in terms of its needs and expectations for educating our youth. Unfortunately, public education has not. Why? The reason is simple:

Principle #1

The current system of public education is ideally suited to produce the results it is now producing.

Make no mistake, the current system is as productive—maybe even more so—than it has ever been throughout its proud history. Since it's functioning so well, you might ask, then just what is everyone complaining about? The unfortunate fact is this:

Principle #2

The current results the public education system is producing are *not* the ones this country needs or wants.

What is causing this obvious disconnect? This large and growing gap between current results and societal needs is driven by two macro changes in our society, both beyond the control of the schools. The first change is the increasing diversification of the children of our country; today we have more minorities, more English language learners, and more poor and disadvantaged students than ever before. The second change is the global technological revolution, which is redefining the very nature of work available to adults in the United States. This redefined work requires both different and higher skill levels.

Clearly one does not have to be the proverbial rocket scientist to realize that the diversification of the public school customers is not going to stop or even slow down. If anything, it is going to increase for the foreseeable future. Likewise, it does not require a rocket scientist to conclude that the genie known as the global technological revolution is not going to crawl back into the bottle. Again, if anything, the global technological revolution is going to increase both in its speed and inconclusiveness.

These powerful new forces impact every sector of our society. Given the inevitability of these forces, and the demand for improved student learning from government, business, higher education, and parents alike, the options available to public education are limited.

Principle #3

The educational system _must_ change in response to our changing society.

To ignore these forces and embrace the status quo is to accept the fate, not of an endangered species, but of an extinct species. We must assume that most public educators are not ready to go the way of the dinosaur. And yet, given the powerful inertia of the system-in-place, it's not unreasonable to wonder if schools **can** change in response to the powerful forces acting upon them. Is successful and sustainable school reform even possible? The answer to the question is "yes," _if the conditions are right._

In considering how one might go about changing the school, two possible approaches come to mind. First, there is the "bottom-up" approach to change. In this case, the top of the system-in-place simply waits for those at lower levels in the system to demand that the schools change in response to the outside forces. The other approach we will refer to as the "top-down" approach. In this case, we would look to the leadership of the system-in-place to demand that the school change. Which course of action would seem to have the greater promise of success?

We know that the system-in-place known as the public school system was never designed to successfully teach a high-standards curriculum to the ever more diverse students. Therefore, we know that changing the school response to successfully confront the new educational realities of the 21st century will require _systems change._

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History tells us that systemic reforms of the type needed by education today rarely "bubble-up" from the bottom of the system. And yet the research on the top-down strategy of change has shown that mandated change, without participant buy-in, won't last. What, then, is the alternative?

Principle #4

Simply put, sustainable school reform and the very survival of public education requires effective leaders who can create and manage a process for change that inspires commitment and action from others.

Leadership, however, is not enough to create sustainable change. As Ron Edmonds said many years ago, "We have found schools that had effective leadership that were not yet effective schools, but we have never found an effective school that did not have an effective leader." In other words, when it comes to school effectiveness, Ron knew that leadership is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. Leaders must have a "theory of action" or framework that provides a comprehensive approach to change.

The history of school reform clearly indicates that successful and sustainable school reform cannot be done piecemeal. For example, the purchase of a new program alone is not likely going to make much change in student success. Likewise, staff development that takes the form of an "event" is not likely to make much difference either. Don't misunderstand, new programs, new strategies, and staff development may

well contribute to sustainable school reform . . . but only if each is part of a comprehensive approach to change. More and more schools and districts are coming to this realization as they fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress year after year, or succeed in reaching their goals one year, but not the next.

Schools and districts must adopt a "big picture" approach to reform that is collaborative and inclusive, data-driven, research-based, and focused on both quality (high standards) and equity (for all students). One proven theory of action is the Effective Schools Continuous School Improvement Process. This framework provides an excellent vehicle through which the leader can create the kind of continuous and sustainable improvement called for in today's educational environment. This model for change is inclusive and collaborative, and will help the leader inspire the stakeholders to commit to a vision of a preferred future. It is a multifaceted framework that integrates systems thinking, total quality management concepts, and over three decades of effective schools research that has focused on what works in schools.

Principle # 5

Effective leadership combined with a proven "theory of action" or framework can accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Within this context, effective leadership is central and essential. Unfortunately, leaders who can manage such sweeping change are in short supply in public education. And giving the daunting challenges ahead and the imminent retirement of many of our

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seasoned educational leaders, this shortage will only get worse. Therefore, schools and districts must identify, train, nurture, and mentor qualified individuals to fill the current and growing void of leadership. Current and aspiring educational leaders seeking to become more effective change agents in their schools need:

1. A clear, compelling vision of a preferred future, supported by clearly understood beliefs and values.

2. An understanding of what leadership is and is not, of various approaches to leadership, and how leadership must change as the organization grows. Against this backdrop leaders must also have opportunities to assess their leadership abilities and skills, and identify areas for need additional training and mentoring;

3. Opportunities to expand and enhance their leadership skills through increased knowledge, insight, and practical application; and

4. Familiarity with a model for continuous and sustainable change that can provide the context and structure within which leader knowledge and skills can be applied and tested.

Few educators—or non-educators, for that matter—would challenge the notion that the stakes are very high for our country when it comes to school reform. The majority of those who have thought about the monumental task of improving public education so all children can be successful would agree that leadership is a critical component. Given what's at stake for our children and our nation, we challenge every educator with this

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question: *Can we find enough individuals who understand and are committed to meeting the challenge of changing public education, who are willing to "step up" to the role of leader?*

Those who understand the need for systemic change and have a burning desire to make it happen have the first crucial requirements for becoming effective leaders. Our question to every educator: *Are you willing to "step up" to the role of leader?* If you answered yes, you have taken the first step in becoming an *effective* leader who can initiate, manage, and monitor positive, successful, and sustainable change leading to improved student learning and achievement.

Principle #6

Our children and our schools deserve nothing less.

This article is adapted from *Stepping Up: Leading the Charge to Improve Our Schools*, by Dr. Larry Lezotte and Kathleen McKee, available from Effective Schools Products, Ltd.
1-800-827-8041 * www.effectiveschools.com

Correlates of Effective Schools:

The First and Second Generation

by Lawrence W. Lezotte

A number of schools have been relying on effective schools research as the framework for their school improvement program. After three or four years, many claim that they have successfully met the criteria described in the research on the correlates of effective schools. These educators ask if there is anything that comes after, or goes beyond, these standards.

The concept of second generation correlates attempts to incorporate the recent research and school improvement findings and offers an even more challenging developmental stage to which schools committed to the **Learning for All** mission ought to aspire.

There are two underlying assumptions to keep in mind: First, school improvement is an endless journey. Second, the second generation correlates cannot be implemented successfully unless the first generation correlate standards are present in the school. In one sense, the second generation correlates represent a developmental step beyond the first and, when successfully accomplished, will move the school even closer to the mission of **Learning for All**.

1. Safe and Orderly Environment

The First Generation: In the effective school there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

The Second Generation: In the first generation, the safe and orderly environment correlate was defined in terms of the absence of undesirable student behavior (e.g., students fighting). In the second generation, the concept of a school environment conducive to **Learning for All** must move beyond the elimination of undesirable behavior. The second generation will place increased emphasis on the presence of certain desirable behaviors (e.g., cooperative team learning). These second generation schools will be places where students actually help one another.

Moving beyond simply the elimination of undesirable behavior will represent a significant challenge for many schools. For example, it is unlikely that a school's faculty could successfully teach its students to work together unless the adults in the school model collaborative behaviors in their own professional working relationships. Since schools as workplaces are characterized by their isolation, creating more collaborative/ cooperative environments for both the adults and students will require substantial commitment and change in most schools.

First, teachers must learn the "technologies" of teamwork. Second, the school will have to create the "opportunity structures" for collaboration. Finally, the staff will have to nurture the belief that collaboration, which often requires more time initially, will assist the schools to be more effective and satisfying in the long run.

But schools will not be able to get students to work together cooperatively unless they have been taught to respect human diversity and appreciate democratic values. These student learnings will require a major and sustained commitment to multicultural education. Students and the adults who teach them will need to come to terms with the fact that the United States is no longer a nation with minorities. We are now a nation of minorities. This new reality is currently being resisted by many of our community and parent advocacy groups, as well as by some educators.

2. Climate of High Expectations for Success

The First Generation: In the effective school there is a climate of expectation in which the staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills, and the staff also believe that they have the capability to help all students achieve that mastery.

The Second Generation: In the second generation, the emphasis placed on high expectations for success will be broadened significantly. In the first generation, expectations were described in terms of attitudes and beliefs that suggested how the teacher should behave in the teaching-learning situation. Those descriptions sought to tell teachers how they should initially deliver the lesson. High expectations meant, for example, that the teacher should evenly distribute questions asked among all students and should provide each student with an equal opportunity to participate in the learning process. Unfortunately, this "equalization of opportunity," though beneficial, proved to be insufficient to assure mastery for many learners. Teachers found themselves in the difficult position of having had high expectations and having acted upon them—yet some students still did not learn.

In the second generation, the teachers will anticipate this and they will develop a broader array of responses. For example, teachers will implement additional strategies, such as reteaching and regrouping, to assure that all students do achieve mastery. Implementing this expanded concept of high expectations will require the school as an organization to reflect high expectations. Most of the useful strategies will require the cooperation of the school as a whole; teachers cannot implement most of these strategies working alone in isolated classrooms.

High expectations for success will be judged, not only by the initial staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the organization's response when some students do not learn. For example, if the teacher plans a lesson, delivers that lesson, assesses learning and finds that some students did not learn, and still goes on to the next lesson, then that teacher didn't expect the students to learn in the first place. If the school condones through silence that teacher's behavior, it apparently does not expect the students to learn, or the teacher to teach these students.

Several changes are called for in order to implement this expanded concept of high expectations successfully. First, teachers will have to come to recognize that high expectations for student success must be "launched" from a platform of teachers having high expectations for self. Then the school organization will have to be restructured to assure that teachers have access to more "tools" to help them achieve successful **Learning for All**. Third, schools, as cultural organizations, must recognize that schools must be transformed from institutions designed for "instruction" to institutions designed to assure "learning."

3. Instructional Leadership

The First Generation: In the effective school the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to the staff, parents, and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.

The Second Generation: In the first generation, the standards for instructional leadership focused primarily on the principal and the administrative staff of the school. In the second generation, instructional leadership will remain important; however, the concept will be broadened and leadership will be viewed as a dispersed concept that includes all adults, especially the teachers. This is in keeping with the teacher empowerment concept; it recognizes that a principal cannot be the only leader in a complex organization like a school. With the democratization of organizations, especially schools, the leadership function becomes one of creating a "community of shared values." The mission will remain critical because it will serve to give the community of shared values a shared sense of "magnetic north," an identification of what this school community cares most about. The role of the principal will be changed to that of "a leader of leaders," rather than a leader of followers. Specifically, the principal will have to develop his/her skills as coach, partner and cheerleader. The broader concept of leadership recognizes that leadership is always delegated from the followership in any organization. It also recognizes what teachers have known for a long time and what good schools have capitalized on since the beginning of time: namely, expertise is generally distributed among many, not concentrated in a single person.

4. Clear and Focused Mission

The First Generation: In the effective school there is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability. Staff accept responsibility for students' learning of the school's essential curricular goals.

The Second Generation: In the first generation the effective school mission emphasized teaching for **Learning for All**. The two issues that surfaced were: Did this really mean all students or just those with whom the schools had a history of reasonable success? When it became clear that this mission was inclusive of all students especially the children of the poor (minority and non-minority), the second issue surfaced. It centered itself around the question: Learn what? Partially because of the accountability

movement and partially because of the belief that disadvantaged students could not learn higher-level curricula, the focus was on mastery of mostly low-level skills.

In the second generation, the focus will shift toward a more appropriate balance between higher-level learning and those more basic skills that are truly prerequisite to their mastery. Designing and delivering a curriculum that responds to the demands of accountability, and is responsive to the need for higher levels of learning, will require substantial staff development. Teachers will have to be better trained to develop curricula and lessons with the "end in mind." They will have to know and be comfortable with the concept of "backward mapping," and they will need to know "task analysis." These "tools of the trade" are essential for an efficient and effective "results-oriented" school that successfully serves all students.

Finally, a subtle but significant change in the concept of school mission deserves notice. Throughout the first generation, effective schools proponents advocated the mission of teaching for **Learning for All**. In the second generation the advocated mission will be **Learning for All**. The rationale for this change is that the "teaching for" portion of the old statement created ambiguity (although this was unintended) and kept too much of the focus on "teaching" rather than "learning." This allowed people to discount school learnings that were not the result of direct teaching. Finally, the new formulation of **Learning for All** opens the door to the continued learning of the educators as well as the students.

5. Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

The First Generation: In the effective school teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills. For a high percentage of this time students are engaged in whole class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activities.

The Second Generation: In the second generation, time will continue to be a difficult problem for the teacher. In all likelihood, the problems that arise from too much to teach and not enough time to teach it will intensify. In the past, when the teachers were oriented toward "covering curricular content" and more content was added, they knew their response should be to "speed-up." Now teachers are being asked to stress the mission that assures that the students master the content that is covered. How are they to respond? In the next generation, teachers will have to become more skilled at interdisciplinary curriculum and they will need to learn how to comfortably practice "organized abandonment." They will have to be able to ask the question, "What goes and what stays?" One of the reasons that many of the mandated approaches to school reform have failed is that, in every case, the local school was asked to do more! One of the characteristics of the most effective schools is their willingness to declare that some things are more important than others; they are willing to abandon some less important content so as to be able to have enough time dedicated to those areas that are valued the most.

The only alternative to abandonment would be to adjust the available time that students spend in school, so that those who need more time to reach mastery would be given it. The necessary time must be provided in a quality program that is not perceived as punitive by those in it, or as excessive, by those who will have to fund it. These conditions will be a real challenge indeed!

If the American dream and the democratic ideal of educating everyone is going to move forward, we must explore several important policies and practices from the past. Regarding the issue of time to learn, for example, if the children of the disadvantaged present a "larger educational task" to the teachers and if it can be demonstrated that this "larger task" will require more time, then our notions of limited compulsory schooling may need to be changed. The current system of compulsory schooling makes little allowance for the fact that some students need more time to achieve mastery. If we could get the system to be more mastery-based and more humane at the same time, our nation and its students would benefit immensely.

6. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

The First Generation: In the effective school student academic progress is measured frequently through a variety of assessment procedures. The results of these assessments are used to improve individual student performance and also to improve the instructional program.

The Second Generation: In the first generation, the correlate was interpreted to mean that the teachers should frequently monitor their students' learning and, where necessary, the teacher should adjust his/her behavior. Several major changes can be anticipated in the second generation. First, the use of technology will permit teachers to do a better job of monitoring their students' progress. Second, this same technology will allow students to monitor their own learning and, where necessary, adjust their own behavior. The use of computerized practice tests, the ability to get immediate results on homework, and the ability to see correct solutions developed on the screen are a few of the available "tools for assuring student learning."

A second major change that will become more apparent in the second generation is already under way. In the area of assessment the emphasis will continue to shift away from standardized norm-referenced paper-pencil tests and toward curricular-based, criterion-referenced measures of student mastery. In the second generation, the monitoring of student learning will emphasize "more authentic assessments" of curriculum mastery. This generally means that there will be less emphasis on the paper-pencil, multiple-choice tests, and more emphasis on assessments of products of student work, including performances and portfolios.

Teachers will pay much more attention to the alignment that must exist between the intended, taught, and tested curriculum. Two new questions are being stimulated by the reform movement and will dominate much of the professional educators' discourse in the second generation: "What's worth knowing?" and "How will we know when they know it?" In all likelihood, the answer to the first question will become clear relatively

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quickly, because we can reach agreement that we want our students to be self-disciplined, socially responsible, and just. The problem comes with the second question, "How will we know when they know it?" Educators and citizens are going to have to come to terms with that question. The bad news is that it demands our best thinking and will require patience if we are going to reach consensus. The good news is that once we begin to reach consensus, the schools will be able to deliver significant progress toward these agreed-upon outcomes.

7. Home-School Relations

The First Generation: In the effective school parents understand and support the school's basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve this mission.

The Second Generation: During the first generation, the role of parents in the education of their children was always somewhat unclear. Schools often gave "lip service" to having parents more actively involved in the schooling of their children. Unfortunately, when pressed, many educators were willing to admit that they really did not know how to deal effectively with increased levels of parent involvement in the schools.

In the second generation, the relationship between parents and the school must be an authentic partnership between the school and home. In the past when teachers said they wanted more parent involvement, more often than not they were looking for unqualified support from parents. Many teachers believed that parents, if they truly valued education, knew how to get their children to behave in the ways that the school desired. It is now clear to both teachers and parents that the parent involvement issue is not that simple. Parents are often as perplexed as the teachers about the best way to inspire students to learn what the school teaches. The best hope for effectively confronting the problem—and not each other—is to build enough trust and enough communication to realize that both teachers and parents have the same goal—an effective school and home for all children!

Lezotte, Lawrence W. *Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation.* Effective Schools Products, Ltd., Okemos, MI, 1991.

Revolutionary and Evolutionary:
The Effective Schools Movement
by Dr. Lawrence W. Lezotte

Someone once said that history is our best teacher. Let's begin our journey with an overview of the Effective Schools Movement and how it has evolved over thirty-plus years.

In July 1966, "The Equal Educational Opportunity Survey" by J.S. Coleman, et al, was published. The Coleman report concluded that family background, not the school, was the major determinant of student achievement. Coleman was foremost among a group of social scientists who, during the 1960s and 70s, believed that family factors such as poverty or a parent's lack of education prevented children from learning regardless of the method of instruction. His report, along with the related literature, was the catalyst to the creation of "compensatory education" programs that dominated school improvement throughout those decades. According to Ron Edmonds, these programs, provided chiefly through Title I of the Elementary Secondary Education Act, "taught low-income children to learn in ways that conformed to most schools' preferred ways of teaching." These programs focused on changing students' behavior in order to compensate for their disadvantaged backgrounds and made no effort to change school behavior.

By lending official credence to the notion that "schools didn't make a difference" in predicting student achievement, the report stimulated a vigorous reaction, instigating many of the studies that would later come to define the research base for the Effective Schools Movement. The educational researchers who conducted these studies, myself among them, developed a body of research that supported the premise that all children can learn and that the school controls the factors necessary to assure student mastery of the core curriculum. Of course, the Effective Schools Movement did not discount the important impact of family on student learning. In 1982, Ron Edmonds published a paper entitled "Programs of School Improvement: An Overview," in which he states "while schools may be primarily responsible for whether or not students function adequately in school, the family is probably critical in determining whether or not students flourish in school."

The first task of the effective schools researchers was to identify existing effective schools – schools that were successful in educating all students regardless of their socioeconomic status or family background. Examples of these especially effective schools were found repeatedly, in varying locations and in both large and small communities. After identifying these schools, the task remained to identify the common characteristics among these effective schools. In other words, what philosophies, policies, and practices did these schools have in common?

Upon closer inspection, the researchers found that all of these especially effective schools had strong instructional leadership, a strong sense of mission, demonstrated effective instructional behaviors, held high expectations for all students, practiced frequent monitoring of student achievement, and operated in a safe and orderly manner.
These attributes eventually became known as the Correlates of Effective Schools.

Edmonds first formally identified the Correlates of Effective Schools in the 1982 publication noted above. In this paper, Edmonds stated that all effective schools had:

- "the leadership of the principal notable for substantial attention to the quality of instruction;
- a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus;
- an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning;
- teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery;
- the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation."

While Edmonds, Brookover, and Lezotte conducted the original effective schools research in elementary schools, another team of researchers in the United Kingdom was conducting similar research, only in secondary schools. Their independent research was published in America in 1979 in the book *Fifteen Thousand Hours* (Rutter, et al, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA). The conclusions they reached about school attributes that positively affect student achievement were nearly identical to those rising out of effective schools research.

The results of the original research in the U.S. and Britain, plus the hundreds of subsequent research studies further confirming the attributes of an effective school, gives credence to this insightful assertion by Ron Edmonds:

> *We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.*

We've come a long way since the Correlates were first published, and the research has continued to bear out these basic beliefs of the Effective Schools Movement:

- all children can learn and come to school motivated to do so;

- schools control enough of the variables to assure that virtually all students do learn;
- schools should be held accountable for measured student achievement;
- schools should disaggregate measured student achievement in order to be certain that students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status are successfully learning the intended school curriculum;
- the internal and external stakeholders of the individual school are the most qualified and capable people to plan and implement the changes necessary to fulfill the **Learning for All** mission.

The Effective Schools Movement, its constituent research, and the Correlates themselves have not only withstood the test of time, but have also evolved and grown as our understanding of effective schools has both deepened and broadened. Over the years, the Correlates have been refined and expanded to the following:

- Instructional Leadership
- Clear and Focused Mission
- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Climate of High Expectations
- Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- Positive Home-School Relations
- Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Other aspects of the Effective Schools Movement have evolved over the years as well. The early definition of effective schools rested on the concept of equity between children from differing socioeconomic classes. As educators became concerned about equity among other subsets of the population, gender, ethnicity, disabilities, and family structure were added to the mix. Furthermore, the early definition was cast in terms of mastery of essential curriculum, i.e., reading and arithmetic. Over time, other curricular outcomes were added: problem-solving ability, higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and communicative ability.

Furthermore, the early Effective Schools Movement emphasized the individual school as the unit of change. Eventually, it became clear that school improvement resulting in increased student achievement could only be sustained with strong district support.

Organizational management theories provided significant additions to effective schools research and policy. The concepts of decentralization and empowerment, the importance of organizational culture, and the principles of total quality management and continuous improvement have added important dimensions to our understanding of effective schools.

A PRIMER ON THE CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

The Correlates are critical to the effective school because they represent the leading organizational and contextual indicators that have been shown to influence student learning. *In other words, the extent to which the Correlates are in place in a school has a dramatic, positive effect on student achievement.* Furthermore, the individual Correlates are not independent of one another, but are interdependent. For example, discipline problems in the learning environment relate to the safety and orderliness of the learning environment as well as the opportunity to learn and time on task.

The following descriptions are intended to give you a basic understanding of each Correlate as it was first conceptualized. As you begin to successfully implement the Correlates, the question may arise, "What next?" At that point, you will be ready to consider and implement the Second-Generation Correlates - an even more challenging developmental stage for schools committed to the **Learning for All** mission. A description of the Second-Generation Correlates is available elsewhere. But you must walk before you run, and the original Correlates must be in place **before** your school can aspire to the next level of development.

Instructional Leadership. In the effective school, the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates the mission of the school to staff, parents, and students. In addition, the principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program. Clearly, the role of the principal as the articulator of the mission of the school is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the school. If you read *In Search of Excellence*, the management bible written by Tom Peters and Bob Waterman, you'll quickly discover that complex organizations, like schools, suffer from drift with respect to the core values or mission. They emphasize that it is the obligation of the leader to make sure that everyone has a shared sense of purpose, and a shared understanding of the mission and core values of the organization. Clearly, schools qualify as complex organizations that require strong leadership. The principal must fulfill this role.

Ron Edmonds often said "there may be schools out there that have strong instructional leaders, but are not yet effective; however, we have never yet found an effective school that did not have a strong instructional leader as the principal." Simply put, the principal as a strong instructional leader is a necessary but not sufficient component of an effective school.

Clear and Focused Mission. In the effective school, there is a clearly articulated mission of the school through which the staff shares an understanding of and a commitment to the school's goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability. The staff in the effective school accepts responsibility for the students' learning of the essential curricular goals.

When we first started doing research on effective schools, we took as a given that schools had a shared understanding of what their mission was and ought to be. The more I work with schools, the more I become convinced that the issue of mission is one that must receive substantial discussion. When you think about all the things that might be done in the name of good education and realize the limits of your time, people power, and energy, it becomes clear that there has to be some focus to the overall effort. This idea of a shared sense of mission is one way to assure that we're all moving in the same direction. One way to ascertain whether your school has a clear focus is to ask each stakeholder "What does this school care most about?" Would you get the same answer from each individual asked, or many different answers? To the extent that there are many answers, the school would be said to lack a shared sense of mission.

Safe and Orderly Environment. In the effective school we say there is an orderly, purposeful, business-like atmosphere, which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

For many years, parents have said that the safety and disciplinary climate of the school is their first concern when judging schools. Recent shootings, bomb scares, and other senseless violent acts have only served to deepen parental concerns. We obviously want the learning environment to be a safe and secure place for its own sake.

We also want schools to be safe and secure because the presence or absence of a safe learning environment enhances or impedes learning. Even if the environment does not sink to the level of shootings or bomb scares, the extent to which student learning is interrupted by routine disciplinary problems serves to diminish learning to some degree. Therefore, the goal of the effective school is to minimize, if not totally eliminate, such incidents.

What I have found in working with schools is that safe and orderly environment is one of the easier Correlates, or characteristics, to address in terms of school improvement if you can get certain prior conditions in place.

Two of those crucial conditions are: (1) All the adults, but most particularly teachers, must accept that they are on duty, all the time, everywhere, during school hours. If there's a place in the school or a time in the day when students perceive that there is no adult on duty, that's my nomination for a trouble spot; (2) Rules must be enforced with absolute consistency across all teachers and administrators in the school. Inconsistency will quickly undercut and destroy the orderly environment of a school. Students will be quick to pick up on inconsistent enforcement and be quick to cry "unfair." Quite frankly, they're right.

Another facet of student behavior bears on both the climate of the learning environment generally, as well as individual student learning specifically. Researchers have documented the importance of student engagement in both the teaching/learning process, as well as the social aspects of the learning environment. Student engagement is important all along the learning path, but becomes especially significant at the middle grades and secondary school levels.

Climate of High Expectations. In the effective school, there is a climate of high expectations in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can obtain mastery of the school's essential curriculum. They also believe that they, the staff, have the capability to help all students obtain that mastery.

What are some of the important implied notions in the high expectations for success? I'd like to emphasize the words **for success** in the description because there are an awful lot of people who believe that simply raising the standards in a school communicates higher expectations to students. Quite frankly, there is a world of difference between high standards and high expectations. High standards are those externalities that we ask students to meet, i.e., graduation requirements. An expectation is the internal belief that the adults have that the kids can and will meet those higher standards. Expectations are crucial.

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress. In the effective school, pupil progress over the essential objectives are measured frequently, monitored frequently, and the results of those assessments are used to improve the individual student behaviors and performances, as well as to improve the curriculum as a whole.

Unfortunately, the results of the assessments often do not get back to the school in time for the teacher and principal to be able to make much use of those data. I'm often asked, "How frequently should you monitor pupil progress?" The answer depends on how frequently are you prepared to adjust your instruction. If you don't ever intend to adjust instruction, then why bother monitoring at all? The only justification for monitoring without adjusting is if you perceive your mission to be that primarily of sorting and selecting students.

Positive Home-School Relations. In the effective school, parents understand and support the basic mission of the school and are given opportunities to play important roles in helping the school to achieve its mission.

I think it's pretty clear that schools can be effective in having the students master the basic skills curriculum without extraordinary levels of parent involvement and support. I can also tell you that it is much easier if parents are part of the collaborative team and are seen by the school as partners in the education of their youngsters. That's a much more difficult task today because of our mobile society and the increase in two-career and single-parent families, as well as the distances some children travel to school.

Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task. In the effective school, teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential curricular areas. For a high percentage of this time, students are actively engaged in whole-class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activity.

This simply says that kids tend to learn most things that they spend time on. If you want your students to master certain curricular objectives and goals, one of the first prerequisites is to assure that they spend time on them. We see instance after instance where students are held accountable for outcomes over which they were never taught. This is patently unfair and must be changed.

Time on task implies that each of the teachers in the school has a clear understanding of what the essential learner objectives are, grade by grade and subject by subject. Once we are clear on what students should be learning, students must be given the time to learn it. This can be tricky because interruptions in the day-to-day flow of routines in the classroom and in the schools seriously and significantly detract from our ability to be effective for all of our kids.

In summary, the Correlates of Effective Schools provide school improvement teams with a comprehensive framework for identifying, categorizing, and solving the problems that schools and school districts face. And because the Correlates are based upon the documented successes of effective schools, they offer hope and inspiration to those struggling to improve. If the schools from which the Correlates are drawn can do it, **so can you!**

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Richard **DuFour**
Rob... **Eaker**
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EDITORS

on common ground

The Power of
Professional Learning Communities

Roland Barth
Rebecca DuFour
Richard DuFour
Robert Eaker
Barbara Eason-Watkins
Michael Fullan
Lawrence Lezotte
Douglas Reeves
Jonathon Saphier
Mike Schmoker
Dennis Sparks
Rick Stiggins

on common ground

The Power of
Professional Learning Communities

Richard **DuFour**
Robert **Eaker**
Rebecca **DuFour**
EDITORS

"The stakes are high, but success could redefine public education and education professions, and enable us to reach unprecedented levels of quality, equity, and achievement."
— *From the Foreword
by Mike Schmoker*

On Common Ground brings the ideas and recommendations of many of North America's educational leaders into one resource for educators working to help their students achieve at ever-higher levels. Each chapter contributes to a sound conceptual framework and specific, practical strategies for developing professional learning communities.

Section 1 Overview

- Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Rebecca DuFour identify the common themes that emerge from the authors.
- Richard DuFour answers the question, What is a professional learning community?

Section 2 Critical Questions

- Douglas Reeves offers advice on the process educators should use to clarify common standards of learning for their students.
- Rick Stiggins offers powerful insights on how to balance assessment *of* learning with assessment *for* learning.
- Jonathon Saphier provides ways for teachers and schools to promote an assumption of "effort-based ability" that calls for extra time and support for students when they experience difficulty in learning.
- Roland Barth suggests that a school committed to student learning will develop lifelong learners rather than good test-takers.

Section 3 Creating PLCs

- Mike Schmoker describes what happens when teams of teachers collaboratively focus on the right issues.
- Dennis Sparks suggests how leaders can shape the dialogue in their schools to foster assumptions essential to successful PLCs.

Section 4 PLCs in a Broader Context

- Lawrence Lezotte explains how the PLC concept supports rather than supplants decades of research on effective schools.
- Barbara Eason-Watkins describes how the Chicago Public Schools is approaching the challenges of promoting PLC concepts in an urban school district.
- Michael Fullan takes the challenge one step further by insisting that PLC schools will remain a minority until a system-wide approach is used to involve districts and entire states or provinces.

Section 5 A Call to Action

- Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Rebecca DuFour issue a call to action to educators to close the "knowing-doing gap" by taking specific, concrete actions to overcome barriers to PLCs.

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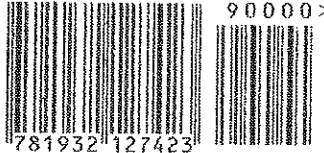
Lawrence W. Lezotte

Anyone interested in school improvement is indebted to Dr. Larry Lezotte, an educator whose name has become synonymous with the Effective Schools movement. His pioneering research with Wilbur Brookover was among the first that identified the differences between schools that were effective and improving versus their counterparts that were low-achieving and declining. This research, along with the findings of Ron Edmonds, Michael Rutter, and others, provided compelling evidence that certain aspects of school culture and practice have a significant impact on the academic performance of students.

In addition to his contributions as a researcher, Dr. Lezotte has authored numerous important articles and books, including *Assembly Required: A Continuous School Improvement System* and its companion *Implementation Guide; Learning for All; The Effective Schools Process: A Proven Path to Learning for All; Creating the Total Quality Effective School;* and *Sustainable School Reform: The District Context for School Improvement.* Additionally, he has published a collection of monographs on the Correlates of Effective Schools.

In this chapter, Dr. Lezotte provides a brief background on the history of the Effective Schools research and describes the rationale and processes needed to embed the Effective Schools research in a school improvement process. He asserts that when educators engage in continuous school improvement processes based on this research, they are demonstrating professional learning communities in action.

Many schools that are moving towards functioning as professional learning communities have found that gaining shared knowledge of the Effective Schools research is helpful in developing the school's vision of the future. Analysis of what is known about highly effective schools lays a foundation that can prove very helpful as the faculty more clearly describes the school they seek to become.

To learn more about Dr. Larry Lezotte and Effective Schools Products, visit www.effectiveschools.com or call (517) 349-8841.

Chapter 9

More Effective Schools: Professional Learning Communities in Action

Lawrence W. Lezotte

The Effective Schools movement will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2006. The history of the Effective Schools movement began with the publication of the Equal Educational Opportunity (EEO) study, also known as the "Coleman Report," in 1966. The now infamous conclusion of that report—that schools do not make a difference—triggered a response that has come to be known as the Effective Schools research. The EEO conclusion was significant because it suggested that if one wanted to know about the achievement of children, one needed to look at the homes from which they came, not the schools in which they learned. Left unchallenged, this conclusion would have essentially rendered schools passive players in helping children achieve the American dream.

In response to this report, a number of independent educational researchers set out to find schools where all children—

especially minority and disadvantaged children—were mastering the intended curriculum. It was thought that finding such schools would serve as compelling evidence that the conclusions of the EEO study were not totally accurate. This successful effort identified many schools that challenged the EEO conclusion that "schools do not make a difference." These initial studies changed the conclusion to "some schools make a difference" and led to the emergence of two new questions:

- Why and how do some schools make a difference?

- Can more schools make a difference?

Why and How Do Some Schools Make a Difference?

The next phase in the evolution of the Effective Schools movement focused on why and how these schools made a difference. The research set out to isolate and describe the critical factors that set the effective schools apart from schools that had similar demographics but were not nearly as effective in terms of measured student achievement. These inquiries identified a series of common characteristics that have come to be known as the Correlates of Effective Schools. The characteristics that were initially described in the early 1970s have remained remarkably stable across many different studies, levels of schooling, and even across countries in diverse areas of the world.

The seven Correlates of Effective Schools are presented in the feature box on the following page. They provide school improvement teams with a comprehensive framework for identifying, categorizing, and solving the problems that schools and school districts face. And because the Correlates are based upon the documented successes of effective schools,

they offer hope and inspiration to schools that are struggling to improve. Utilizing the collaborative approach of professional learning communities within this framework will yield a powerful and effective continuous school improvement process leading to increased student achievement for all students.

Can More Schools Make a Difference?

As the correlates began to make their way into various educational publications and were presented at professional conferences, educational leaders from across the nation began to ask the researchers for help in applying the research in their own schools. These requests represented both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity was grounded in the shared belief that schools could make a difference if they were guided by the lessons learned from the original studies in the Effective Schools research. The challenge arose from the realization that although the research identified the components of effective schools, it did not clearly identify how these schools had become effective.

The Seven Correlates of Effective Schools

1. Instructional Leadership

2. Clear and Focused Mission

3. Safe and Orderly Environment

4. Climate of High Expectations for Success

5. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

6. Positive Home-School Relations

7. Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task

The schools that served as the focus of the Effective Schools research were already effective when they were first identified; now we were being asked to move from describing an existing condition to prescribing how other schools could achieve the same results and become more effective. This would be a challenge, indeed, since we had no idea of the processes the effective schools had used to achieve their unusually high levels of success. Clearly, the schools seeking to emulate their more effective counterparts needed a process and plan of action. Faced with this potential to make a difference in public education and have a positive impact on the achievement of minority and disadvantaged students, we set forth to meet the challenge.

Creating the Effective Schools Process

As we began to think about the challenge, we decided that, as would-be change agents, we would need to practice what we preached. If we were going to ask educators to change their practices based on the Effective Schools research, we would have to use the best available research to guide us in creating a process and a plan of action that had the best possible chance of success. We chose to look at the challenge of school change through three different lenses:

- First, we said that if schools were going to change, then the *people* who work in them would have to change their behaviors to some degree. Therefore, the research that informs this framework would be found by examining characteristics of effective training or staff development programs.

- Second, we said that if schools were going to change, then each *organization* and its operating systems would

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need to change. This led us to the research on effective organizational and systemic change.

- Finally, we believed that school change, as we conceived it, represented planned or intentional change. With this perspective in mind, we set out to determine what *process* characteristics were associated with effective planned organizational and system change.

Ironically, the characteristics associated with effectiveness of these three different conceptualizations of school change converge, for the most part, around a common list of strategies, including strong and continuing support from leaders and the expertise and time needed for the planning and execution of the change strategies. The first and most compelling success factor was the realization that effective and sustainable change requires commitment from the individuals from whom behavioral change is needed. We concluded that high levels of sustained commitment can only be realized when the affected individuals are involved and engaged in planning the changes they are expected to execute. And the involvement and engagement of others must, in turn, begin with a leader who is personally committed to an inclusive, collaborative process, who is willing to encourage and nurture others to participate and take on leadership roles.

Involvement. The book *Tinkering Toward Utopia* by David Tyack and Larry Cuban (1995) provides a clear and compelling description of why the involvement process is the cornerstone of sustainable school change. The authors note that most efforts to reform schools in the 1900s died on the front steps of the schoolhouse because reforms tended to be launched from outside the school and usually were "top-down." They describe

the advocates of these top-down, outside-in reforms as "policy talkers." The teachers and administrators usually had little, if any, voice in shaping the reform efforts. A top-down, outside-in reform effort can be brought to the schoolhouse door without local teacher or administrator involvement. However, we concluded that school reform could be neither successful nor sustainable unless it was embraced by the teachers, administrators, and support staff that define the professional community of that school.

Collaboration. A second book, *The Three Faces of Power*, by internationally recognized economist and scholar Kenneth Boulding (1989), served to buttress the argument for a process that was collaborative in form. Educators often bristle at the notion of using a book about "power" to talk about school reform until they learn more about Boulding's perspective. His work recognized that organizations develop a tremendous inertia to do again what they have always done. The problem of institutional inertia is no less true for schools. Boulding suggests that change advocates must confront institutional inertia by using power to leverage change on the system.

Boulding wrote that there are three forms of power:

1. "Stick power" is the power of threat.

2. "Carrot power" is the power of incentive.

3. "Hug power" is the power derived from shared vision, values, and beliefs.

Boulding concludes that although there are times when you need all three types of power, the greatest of these is "hug power." We found Boulding's observations compelling; they provided us with further support for the collaborative processes that we

used to help promote school change based on Effective Schools research.

These sources and others all point to the fact that sustainable change must engage those who are the keepers of the culture in any organization. As a result, our approach to school improvement relies on involvement by a collaborative, school-based school improvement team as the cornerstone and energy source for school-by-school change.

The Core Leadership Group

Our basic approach to establishing and sustaining the collaborative process has involved a small, representative group of the stakeholders in a school: the core leadership group. Generally, we recommend that the team include but not be limited to the principal, a cross section of the teaching faculty, and representatives of noncertified staff members and parents. At the secondary level, we strongly encourage involving students as a part of the core group.

As noted author Peter Block has said, changing an organization begins with changing the *conversation* within the organization (1993). Thus, the leadership team's first responsibility is to initiate and sustain an ongoing conversation of school change based on the Effective Schools research.

The Effective Schools research framework lends itself nicely to engaging a wider circle of staff and other stakeholders. We encourage establishing a cross-sectional team of stakeholders for each of the seven correlates and charging each committee with looking at the school through that lens, finding the relevant research and best practices, and making change recommendations to the core leadership group and the faculty as a whole based on their findings.

The Mission of the Leadership Group

The leadership group has a particular mission and purpose: it is empowered by the school community to serve as trustees of the school's mission. In that regard, they have several duties and responsibilities:

- First, as trustees they are expected to initiate and sustain an ongoing discourse on school improvement.

- Second, they are expected to constantly scan the external educational environment for new research, new ideas, and new possibilities that could improve the school.

- Third, they are expected to constantly examine the internal environment of the school, asking the evaluative question, "Is what we are currently doing working?"

- Fourth, they are expected to monitor the change efforts to ensure they are being implemented and having the desired positive impact on student learning.

- Finally, they are expected to oversee the celebration of successful change efforts.

The Core Beliefs of the Effective Schools Process

Our recommended collaborative process is based on a set of core beliefs that need to be discussed and, once understood, embraced by the school community. The following six beliefs provide further guidance and direction to the collaborative process:

1. School improvement must be school-by-school and one school at a time.

2. There are only two kinds of schools—improving schools and declining schools.

3. Every adult in a school is important.

4. The capacity to improve a school already resides in the school.

5. You and your colleagues are already doing the best you can given what you know and the current conditions in which you find yourself.

6. All children can learn and the school controls enough of the variables to assure that virtually all students do learn.

1. School improvement must be school-by-school and one school at a time. We have had our best success when the collaborative processes are in place within school-wide groups. In our experience, collaborative groups that bring together stakeholders from several schools at the same time do not work well. For example, some districts have created district-wide elementary reading teams. While there is a place for such conversations, they do not substitute for the conversations of a school-level team.

Likewise, we have not seen great success with collaborative groups that represent only a small segment of the school. For example, grade-level groups have a place in school change, but we have had more success with teams that represent the school as a whole and focus on a particular topic or area of organizational interest, such as a school that chooses to incorporate a focus on literacy across all content areas. The need for school-wide conversation is especially important when schools are struggling to create the vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment demanded by the standards and accountability movement today. However, despite the lack of success we have seen with these two strategies, we believe that school reforms

must always be adapted to fit the context of the individual school if they are to be successful and sustained.

2. There are only two kinds of schools—improving schools and declining schools. This core belief directly confronts an unspoken assumption held by some educators: the assumption of "the status quo school." The standards and accountability movement, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and other governmental reform policies define the reality of schools today. Taken together, they virtually eliminate the status quo option. According to author Jack Bowsher (2001) in his book *Fix Schools First*, even the highest achieving schools in the United States have upwards of 30% of their students failing to meet the grade-level standards of NCLB. Within this context, a status quo school would be described as a declining school, and educators clinging to this concept of the status quo school as "average" would be misguided.

Obviously, most educators would rather be associated with improvement than decline. When a school embraces this belief, the conversation moves from "Should we seek reform?" to "What reforms should we pursue?" Since schools are not only expected to improve, but also to improve quickly, this shift in the conversation is significant in providing the impetus for immediate action.

3. Every adult in a school is important. A strong argument can be made that no one is more important in achieving the learning mission of a school than the teacher. On the other hand, a school's culture is maintained through the actions of virtually every adult in every role in the school. As a result, the quality of life in a school community is enhanced when all the members of that community understand and accept their roles,

rights, and responsibilities. For example, high school guidance counselors play a critical role in communicating high or low expectations to students. Therefore, if reform is to be effectively and efficiently implemented, the change process must reach out and give voice to all the keepers of the culture to secure their commitment.

4. The capacity to improve a school already resides in the school. Often schools come to believe that the resources needed to change a school reside outside the school. This belief, when unchallenged, seems to provide a level of comfort to those who hold this view by placing the responsibility for change beyond their control. Certainly external resources of one sort or another can often facilitate the reform effort. Nonetheless, there is virtually no limit to what schools can do to improve, despite an initial lack of resources, if the stakeholders join together in a common commitment to change. It has been said that we find the time and resources to do those things that we value. When stakeholders highly value a common vision of "learning for all," they become very creative in finding the necessary time and resources for making the vision a reality. My colleague Ron Edmonds best conveyed this sentiment when addressing a school faculty. He would remind them that they already knew more than they needed to know to improve the school. He would go on to say that whether or not they did so would ultimately come down to how they felt about the fact that they had not done it so far.

5. You and your colleagues are already doing the best you can given what you know and the current conditions in which you find yourself. A major source of resistance once the collaborative conversation begins comes from individuals who believe that a call for

change implies that they are negligent and not doing a good job. This core belief addresses this concern by acknowledging that professionals are already doing the best they can given what they know. If that is accepted as true, we know that successful sustainable change will require that new knowledge make its way into the school and to its staff. The collaborative team process provides an ideal vehicle for continuous professional learning.

Sustainable change in a school requires not only change in the knowledge of the staff, but also in the conditions that make up the school as a network of interdependent components. Usually, the successful implementation of new knowledge requires change in one or more of the components in the system. This could mean a change in the instructional delivery system, scheduling, student grouping, staff development, or any other component of the school's structural, personnel, or instructional systems.

6. All children can learn and the school controls enough of the variables to assure that virtually all students do learn. This is the most important belief that provides the foundation for school improvement based on the Effective Schools research. Before we address the challenges to this belief, we need to be clear. This belief does not say that all children can learn the same day, at the same rate, or in the same way. As a matter of fact, one of the keys to successful "learning for all" is based on the willingness of the school staff to customize and differentiate its services to meet the specific needs of each student.

Once the empowered school community embraces this belief and begins to open up to the possibility of "learning for all," the question then becomes, "What needs to change to

make this possible?" Our experience verifies that the possibilities are unlimited once a dedicated school staff goes in search of research and best practices to advance their shared vision of learning for all. However, until they embrace the possibility that all children can learn, the obstacles and barriers they will find are virtually endless and will seem insurmountable.

Professional Learning Communities in Action

School improvement efforts based on the Effective Schools framework have grown steadily since the 1970s. The number of individual schools and school districts that have used this process as their strategy has been difficult to calculate because no one agency or individual is responsible for keeping such information. We do know, however, that whole states, such as Texas, have used the Effective Schools framework as the required process for campus accreditation. We know that many of the regional accreditation agencies have modified their processes and now expect schools to use this basic framework as part of their accreditation efforts. We know that reforms in Federal Title I policies direct schools toward this framework for school-wide improvement planning. Finally, we know that the core ideas of No Child Left Behind—such as the required disaggregation of assessment scores—were directly influenced by the Effective Schools research and improvement framework. The evolution of the Effective Schools movement and its success over time provides evidence of the necessity and sustainability of professional learning communities.

Continuous school improvement based on the Effective Schools research has a long and proud history of improving student achievement when the processes of change are implemented with fidelity and sustained over time. We have found

that when schools adopt the Effective Schools research as a common language, incorporate the research on effective teaching practices, and then take steps to assure that all staff members are grounded in these concepts, the essential ingredients for improvement are at hand. When we empower an ever-enlarging conversation of school change by engaging a leadership team and other study groups, the essential processes for continuous learning and change begin to stir. Finally, when the system provides the time for teams to meet and learn how to learn together, the momentum for sustainable change steadily builds.

The concept of the professional learning community was not part of the school improvement lexicon when the Effective Schools journey began. It would have been easier and more efficient to engage schools in the conversations around the research if it had been. Nonetheless, without taking unreasonable revisionist liberties when we look back over the last 40 years of efforts to improve schools based on Effective Schools research, it seems fair to say that the philosophy and core concepts of professional learning communities have been essential components of the process. Clearly, continuous school improvement based on the Effective Schools research is an example of professional learning communities in action.

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Nancy Sellers interview with Dr. Larry Lezotte, November, 2002 edition of the Audio Journal.

Transcript

Nancy: Hello, I'm Nancy Sellers. Scott Adams and I welcome you again to the executive briefing for this month. Do you agree with the following statements: 1) All children can learn and come to school motivated to do so; number 2) schools have sufficient control of the variables to assure that students do learn; number 3) Schools should be held accountable for measured student achievement; and four, schools should desegregate the measured student achievement in order to be certain that all students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or social class, are successfully learning the intended school curriculum.

Scott: if you do agree, then you share the fundamental beliefs of Dr. Larry Lezotte and the foundation of the effective schools movement. For over 35 years, Dr. Lezotte has reviewed the most current research and incorporated it into a framework that he calls the Effective Schools process. The Effective Schools League[1] was started as a support group and major resource for those schools using the effective schools process. Dr. Lezotte has written extensively on school improvement and effective schools. As a consultant, he conducts hundreds of workshops and conferences around the country. His web site is a treasure-chest of summaries of the latest research, commentaries by Dr. Lezotte and essential information on transforming your school into an more effective school. Here is Nancy's interview with one of the leading–edge thinkers in education today.

Nancy: thank you for talking with us, Dr. Lezotte. Your research is known throughout the country and your effective schools league is a great asset to school districts wanting to be part of a national network. But for those who may be new and not familiar with your work, let's start with the traditional overview of effective schools and your programs.

Lezotte: Well, let me go back and give you a little bit of the history on effective schools and then see where it comes out. As some of you may know, the effective schools movement started in about 1966, in response to the claim that schools didn't make a difference, and the research, to make a long interesting story short, is that, in fact, researchers all over the country including ourselves, and some others in California and Maryland did conduct a study in which they identified essentially using the modern term what the "value added" was of schools- especially schools that were doing an outstanding job of educating poor and minority children.

And that began the journey and that journey has continued pretty much uninterrupted from then until now. Where we stand now is, that we have more research that corroborates the key elements that are working for poor kids. We have a good track record of schools that have made a difference and have implemented the findings of that research in a thoughtful and thorough way. And we now have the answers. We have a network of people. From my own part in this, what we've been doing for the last 3 or 4 years now, is building an on-line effective schools league, which is a on-line service of research and best practices for educators and also creating within that league, the capacity for people to share issues and share solutions to their own problems and problems that others are facing. It's turning out to be a very good service, a good product, and it's really helping to help the energy that's going into these schools work for more poor kids.

Nancy: Why do we need a new system – what you call the effective learning system in the first place? What does this system add to the full agenda of school improvement anyway?

Lezotte: Well, Nancy, the reason we need a new system kind of goes as follows: first of all, if we look back at more or less traditional measures of education, we see that, actually, education in terms of results has been getting better over the years. That is to say, more kids are graduating from high schools, literacy scores are up, test scores are generally up. The

problem and the reason for the change that it needed that we are going to be talking about in a minute is because the society has raised the change as a need for educated people is going up faster than the schools are able to keep up.

So, even though the schools are doing better, there is a widening of gap between what is needed and what is being delivered. And the question is then, how do we go about creating that. Well, one of the things that I've been using as a kind of a framework for why schools need to change is that if you look at some of the writings out there from key people, you begin to see some of the evidence that makes the case. For example, one of the books that I cite, Teaching The New Basic Skills for Education in a Thriving Economy, was written by 2 professors from Harvard, published in 1996.

It was noted that if kids are going to graduate from school, and have a shot at the middle class income, or if they go into the world of work, they are going to need to be masters of at least 6 skills. The 6 skills that they identify are: 1) Read at a 9th grade level or higher; 2) Do math at the 9th grade level or higher; 3) Solve semi-structured problems; 4) Communicate both orally and in writing; 5) Work with people who are different; 6) And, also be able to use computers for basic process.

Now that seems like a relatively simple, straightforward list of 6 enabling skills to get into the middle class work place. The problem is that when they followed up and tested some 6,000 high school graduates - all of whom had a diploma - against those 6 standards, they found that only about 10% of the high school diploma kids that they tested could meet those 6 standards. Which is to say, if that's true, that means that we have a huge job to do in terms of upgrading the quality and level of education.

Another example is that Alan Odden[2], who is one of the prolific writers in educational finance, in his work, Financing Schools for High Performance[3], which was published in 90's, noted that schools were going to increase their productivity by 150% in the next 8 to 10 years. He defines an increase of 150% in productivity in the following way: He said, if you take all the kids

who achieve in your district right now, and you rank order them from the highest achieving boys and girls to the lowest, and then you come down from the top of the distribution to what would represent the 75th% percentile, that is, the score that cuts the top 25% from the bottom 75%, he said that in 8 years or less, the schools have got to get all of the kids below that line, above that line.

Now my point is, when you lay out those kinds of definitions of the need for change, the one thing that becomes eminently clear to me, is that you are not going to make those kind of changes in the system that's in place by simply working a little harder. That we have to go back to the basic structure and systemic nature of schools and school districts. What that all leads to, for me, is that what we need to do is transform the system from a teacher-centered system, to a learning-centered system. And that requires major shifting, mindset, and paradigm if we are going to meet those kinds of challenges.

Nancy: Describe the three questions you like to ask your audiences about student learning, and our goal for learning for all, just to set the stage.

Lezotte: The 3 questions that I've asked people to weigh in on, and I've paneled them as a jury, and I ask for a show of hands, and I get usually unanimous support for these 3 questions. The first question I ask is the question, "Do you believe that when kids first make contact with the public school system - that is, at kindergarten usually - do you believe they already reflect substantial variability in readiness for school?" Almost every one in the group will raise their hand affirming that to be true.

And then I say, "Do you believe that kids learn at different rates?" And, most of the educators say again, yes, that's definitely true. So there's affirmation about variability and rates of learning. And then, my 3rd question is, "Do you believe that what kids learn in one level of schooling is somewhat dependent on what they did or didn't learn prior to 4th grade?" And they always affirm that there are dependencies across the levels. So,

to put those 3 facts together, that is, there's variability on intake, variability in rates of progress, and dependencies across the levels of learning, I said, if that's true, there's no way that we are going ever be able to be successful at teaching all kids if we continue to place kids on a basis of chronological age, (age-based placement), and simultaneously give each student the same dose of the medicine, what we really need to do is develop a new system that is different in placement and different in judging how progress.

Where we start to go with that whole discussion, is the notion of the idea of continuous improvement, continuous progress, un-graded, flexible system of education rather than the fixed system of classroom, a whole year, all the kids in the room basically the same age, those old models do not hold out if our goal is learning for all.

Nancy: I was impressed with the wonderful analogy you make in your presentations about school improvement being similar to home improvement. You need to tell our listeners about it.

Lezotte: Well, one of the things I try to do with educators is that they already know what they need to do. I base that on the fact that virtually every adult in the room has had experience, some direct experience, with doing home improvement. And so some of the key ideas about the analogy about home improvement, school improvement, goes as follows:

The first point I make is that, if you said to me, "I am currently involved in doing home improvement." No one thinks that we are a bad homeowner when we do home improvement because they recognize that home improvement is a natural part of the process of home ownership. From time to time you have to do things to change, to upgrade, to refresh and so forth.

So, the one point I try to make is try to get people past the defensiveness of seeing school improvement as somehow an indictment that they are not doing their job right. That's not the point at all. We know things now, we know how to do things

better than we used too. As a result, we ought to improve the school. It's time to do that, just like it's time to improve the home.

The 2nd part of the analogy that I think is appropriate is, I often ask people to think back to the last time you were engaged in home improvement. And my point is this; I asked them, "What was it that started the home improvement process?" The answer that I get back is that home improvement begins in our own home when someone inside the home becomes dissatisfied enough with the status quo that they want to risk change. I make the point that in school improvement, authentic school improvement is going to be launched when someone inside the home becomes dissatisfied with status quo to the point where they are willing to risk change. It's the same kind of thing.

One of the functions of leadership for change in schools or districts is to manage and deliberately launch and to manage dissatisfaction. You've got to create dissidence in the minds of the people who are going to be impacted by the change. They've got to come to believe in their head and heart that we can do better and ought to do better than we are doing right now.

The next thing that I talk about in terms of drawing out the analogy also, is the notion that, "What is the first concrete step in home improvement?' Well, you often hear people say, "You have to go get the money to do it, you have to get a loan." I say, "No, No. Even the bank won't give you a loan unless they see the plan, the vision of what you are going to do with the money."

So my point is that the first concrete step is to begin to build a vision of what it is you want the new school to look like. And that means studying the research, best practices, principles of human learning, and begin to build a vision for what needs to be different if our goal is learning for all. So we play that piece out.

Another part of the parallel, is one of the things that we do when we do home improvement remodeling and redecorating, is that we know one of the things we have to do in our home is we have to decide what goes and what stays. I make the parallel: you never would imagine yourself going out and buying a whole

new set of living room furniture and bringing it in, setting it next to the old. You wouldn't do that for about 3 reasons. First of all, if the old were good enough to keep, you wouldn't buy the new, secondly, it would look cluttered, and thirdly, we have to let things go as their time passes and so the point I'm trying to get them to see, is abandoning certain things, even if they've been things that we've cherished in the past, practices, lessons, procedures, it may be time to let them go and service to the new.

One of the other last pieces we put in there is the whole notion of celebration. That is when we finish the remodeling, often times one of the ways we acknowledge the job having been done is to have some kind of a celebration that goes with it.

So, we've worked with that analogy and it holds up. There are other dimensions of it that we can go further with. The point is, if people would look at school improvement as a natural evolutionary process that needs to take into account what isn't working very well now, and are there things that would work better if we had these approaches to learning, I think we are going to go a long way toward trying to be de-mythologize and demystify school improvement. That's the whole purpose of the analogy.

Nancy: You said so many affirmative things, Larry. You don't need to have broken house to update and remodel it- or improve it. You need a plan, a budget and access to sufficient resources or materials. And then you invite your friends to see the new family room or kitchen cabinets – whatever. Sounds like a wonderful analogy for education, too. Larry, can you detail the seven correlates of effective schools, as described in your workshops and writings?

Lezotte: Well, Nancy, probably there's no one concept that is more characteristic or basic to the effective schools model than the 7 correlates of effective schools. Let me take a minute to run them down. The 7 correlates that we use as the basic frames for our work is the first one is, **1) Safe, orderly environment**; the way we describe that is to say that in the effective school there is

an orderly, purposeful, business-like atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm, the school climate is not oppressive and it's conducive to teaching and learning. Safe, orderly environment. Pretty hard to argue against that.

The **2nd correlate** of characteristic of effective schools is that they are notable for the fact that **they have and exhibit a high expectation for success**. In the effective school there is a climate of expectation in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can attain mastery in the schools, essential skills, and that they the staff have the capability to successfully teach all children. So the (2nd correlate) safe, high expectations is a partner with safe orderly environment.

The **3rd characteristic** is a **"clear and focused mission"**. In the effective school there is a clear focused mission which sets the goals, sets the priority, sets the essential learning, in that the staff accept responsibility for teaching that mission and those educational goals and skills and so forth. So there's clear focus.

The **4th characteristic is strong, instructional leadership**. In the effective school the principal acts as the instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates the mission to staff, parents, and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program. That's strong instructional leadership.

The **5th characteristic is opportunity to learn time on-task**. Now, in the effective schools every student has the opportunity to learn what it is that he/she needs to know to succeed on whatever assessments are given as well as to be prepared for success at the next levels of learning. One of the things that I talk about passionately, is that a lot of the gaps between the middle class kids and the disadvantaged kids if you trace it through the "head waters", it's really a gap in opportunity to learn, it is not a gap in ability to learn, it is a gap in opportunity to learn. We need to address that. That's one that can be addressed very quickly.

The **6th characteristic is the frequent monitoring of student progress**. In the effective schools, student academic progress is measured frequently and monitored frequently, a variety of assessments are used and the results of the assessments are used to improve both the individual student performance as well as to improve the overall instructional program of the school.

The 7th characteristic that we talk about is positive home/school relations. In that, we say in the effective schools parents understand, and support the basic mission of the school, and they are given numerous opportunities to play important roles in helping the school to achieve that mission. And that whole notion of positive partnership with parents becomes a very critical part of the whole maintaining of effectiveness. Schools can be effective without high levels of parent involvement and support, but it is made much easier and much more sustainable if they have that good, positive partnership with parents.

So, all in all, those are the 7 characteristics. There's abundant research around each one standing alone, and there's abundant research around the importance of that set of characteristics as a way of framing out how to step back, first of all, and look at a school, and then secondly how to begin action steps to improve the school.

Nancy: For those who want the seven characteristics or correlates to share with their staffs, visit our web site to download a paper Dr. Lezotte wrote describing them in greater detail. I couldn't think of better use of faculty meeting to discuss these major correlates of effective schools. I noticed one of the seven correlates is the frequent monitoring of student progress. Well, with all the accountability, high stakes testing and standards based instruction; I think we have that covered by default, don't we?

Lezotte: First of all, there's a lot more testing going on than there is useful monitoring of learning going on in school. So what

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I would like to do is have less testing and more monitoring. Let me explain to you where I'm coming from in that difference.

For example, I understand why there is special backlash to state assessment. Let me talk about the negative first, then talk about how I think my vision of monitoring presents a different approach to that. First of all, most of the states, as you well know, have state assessment programs of one sort or another; and, most all of them are notable for a couple of facts. First of all, they are standardized systems and they are usually administered once a year. So, the feedback cycle at best is an annual cycle which is way, way, too infrequent for information if your goal is to improve learning.

Now the first thing that we have, is that it's not that there's too much testing, it's that we have too little to be useful in terms of student learning. The idea here is that if you're going to try to improve something, you have to get more frequent feedback, not less frequent. So the annual cycle is one, and as a result of that annual approach, most teachers see assessment as it's now done in their schools and states, as an intrusion and a diversion from learning rather than as a tool to help learning.

Effective schools have found a way to use monitoring as a tool for enhancing learning, not a diversion from learning. That's one of the key things. The other thing that's a basis for the criticism that it comes at, the testing and assessment movement, the results are not back to teachers in a timely fashion. If results are going to improve learning, you've got to move as near to real time data as you can get. Most of the assessment results that states administer now don't return to the school for weeks or maybe even months.

It's not uncommon to find that when the test results get back to a teacher, the student on whom those tests were administered has already moved to the next grade or another teacher. What we need to do is move toward real time information.

Let me give you an example of that. If you're driving down the street and a police car is coming up behind you, and you look down at your speedometer in your car, it doesn't do you much

good to know that what the speedometer's giving you is how fast your car was going at this time last week. What you want to know is how fast you are going right now, if you're going to be held accountable. So, we've got to move the system toward real time data and quick feedback if they are going to be useful. So, I understand the criticisms of the testing because the way the results are not very useful.

Now, let's go to monitoring. Monitoring, first of all, if you were to go back, Nancy, and re-listen to the answer I gave on frequent monitoring, you would say I said, "A variety of procedures are used, and the results are used to improve individual student learning as well as to improve classroom and school-wide instructional program. Now the point is, to be useful, it needs to be relatively immediate to the learners and to the classroom. If I was going to try to build a monitoring system, with technology this could be done. There are some programs out there right now that come close to doing this.

For example, one of the programs that I sight as I think having the qualities that we are looking for in monitoring, is a program called, "Accelerated Reader[4]" which is a computer-based, self-based program where kids are leveled in terms of where their reading level is at the moment. They are given choices about books to read, and as soon as the student finishes the book, he/she logs on the computer and takes an assessment over that book. He gets immediate results on how well he/she did. Not only does he get immediate results and immediate feedback that either tells him that he did understand and comprehend, or that he didn't; but the teacher of that student also has access to that information.

By that frequent monitoring of progress then, kids can see themselves whether they are making forward movement, the teacher can monitor the kids performance and make adjustments, and help him. So, that's the difference between frequent monitoring versus more testing. And then, a lot of the tests that the states are using are norm reference tests. And norm reference tests are not, were not, and probably never will be designed to assess whether kids have learned what they were taught. And so we are using the wrong measuring tool to try to

do the job in many cases, which just adds the frustration and the rage amongst practitioners.

So, for all of those reasons, I make a distinction between monitoring, or learning, versus testing for accountability. Now they could be moved worlds closer together so that one can serve two purposes, but right now the push is on accountability and not necessarily on enhancing learning. So I'm still a strong believer in the frequent monitoring of progress in order to help learning. But I also can empathize with the criticism of the way in which a lot of the testing is occurring across the country right now.

Nancy: I couldn't help wondering, Larry, about the research on effective leaders. There must be some correlates here too, right?

Lezotte: That's kind of an interesting question, Nancy, because here's the situation, which I have come around to, and some recent research, which I'll cite in a second, verifies this. And that is - early on - in my quest to try to understand how these correlates work, I went to schools that were high performing, but, they were in populations where you might expect high performance. That is, if you went into a middle class or upper middle class neighborhood and looked at a high achieving school, and then you tried to sort out what the leadership does in those schools, the fact of the matter is, I could never get very far with it because you don't need high leadership to get high achievement in a school where you could throw a book at a kid and he'll learn.

So that didn't help me very much. So, I started to begin to say, "Okay. Let's look at leadership in relationship to creating change, beating the odds, making a difference", and then I said, "Okay, where do we find that?" And, of course you are going to find that in schools that are serving more disadvantaged kids where the achievement is high, and so, you begin to look for these out of line kind of schools and then when you do that, you begin to go in and you try to say, "Okay, what is the leadership?"

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And, of course, we always find strong instructional leadership in those places, because they are non-normative situations. They are schools that are doing things different. So, then we start to try to focus on the leader and what is his/style? What are their dispositions? What are their personalities, and so forth?

And one of the things we find is that again, you can find effective leaders in those kinds of schools that are big or small, short or tall. We couldn't come up with a personality style very much except to know that they are very passionate about the belief that the role and function of the school is learning, and that they are going to do everything they can do to use the office of the principal to put that in place. So, when I read these studies about leadership styles and so forth, they are intriguing, but they don't help me very much.

What does help me, and this is where the new research is, I just finished doing a review of a study that was published out of the Southern Regional Education Board that was done with a grant from the Wallace-Readers Digest group where they reviewed the literature on effective leaders in schools, and what that concluded is, it's not so much a profile of style that identifies effective leaders, it simply says that effective leaders have the capacity to put together the pieces and parts of an instructional program that will work for those kids.

It's kind of like they are using bailing wire and whatever else. But, they put together tutoring models in conjunction with good time, on-task models, in conjunction with this, that and the other thing, and they keep working with it until they find a combination of practices, and procedures, and strategies that will work for their kids. And so I find that a very encouraging sign because we are now maybe getting past the personality style stuff and getting into saying, "Here are the things that leaders can do, and good leaders already do, do in order to assure that all their kids are going to be successful. "

A friend of mine who is a superintendent of a highly effective district for 10 years, and he is now retired from that, and he tells the story across the country. His name is Jerry Anderson from Brazelport, Texas, which is one of the districts that President

Bush celebrated when he was running for President. But in talking with Jerry over dinner one night, I said, "Jerry, where did you get this passion for making a difference that you made across the school district of 30,000 kids?"

He said, "One of the slogans they used, is 'No Excuses'. I said, "Where did that come from?" He said it came from his training when he was a fighter pilot in the marines. He said you have to have every person on your team doing their job the very best they can, and when it isn't right, there can be "no excuses". He took that mindset in working with his schools and as they say, the rest is history.

The problem we have, my opinion is, that we don't have enough leaders at the district level or enough leaders at the building level that come into the business with an attitude that it can be done, and, that if we all work together and do what we do best, it will work.

I'm anxious now to keep trying to document the things that these effective leaders do - not what their style is - but what they do to make schools work for kids. This begins to go in the direction of what I alluded to real early on, which is that, we need to create a learning-centered system, rather than the current teacher-centered system.

Nancy: Thanks for the insights, Larry. As you may know, we usually ask our contributors for a final piece of advice.

Lezotte: Nancy, if I could give them a couple pieces of advice, one would be to be first of all, be clear about what the mission is. The mission is about learners and learning, it's not about adults and just about teaching. Once you begin to accept a mission that is a learning mission, and that we are now going to go along with no excuses around learning, then you begin to say, "Okay, if that's true, what is the knowledge base that ought to inform how we design systems to deliver that mission?"

The answer is, you will not find, some of the most valuable research will not be found in universities, around teachers and teacher education; some of the most valuable research that will inform the system issues are going to come out of the research that's been done around learning and some of the research that's been done around effective training.

Let me give you two examples. Over the history of my experience, two places that have stood up among many others, one is the <u>Office of Research in the US Dept. of Navy</u>[5] has done some of the best research on human learning that can help inform what schools ought to be about over the years; one of the key persons from 30 years ago that started that line of research was Robert Garnier, and he still is a writer and contributor to that.

Another place where you might not expect a lot of good information is <u>Bell Labs</u>[6]. Bell Labs has done a lot of research on basic learning. In the Navy, when their job is to help provide training to show people how to use their rifles, they don't care about styles of teaching, they just want to make sure that learning occurs. They've done what they needed to do, and the private sector has grabbed onto that research. Because the private sector that does a lot of training of new employees, and upgrading the skills of the work force, they have to be on the money with how to present material that the learner will learn and master in as efficient way as possible. So there is a lot of information out there that we can draw on.

A while ago, an urban Superintendent asked me to come to her district to do a workshop for the principals, for what the principals ought to look for when they are doing their teacher evaluation roles, and going to the classrooms to what should the principals be watching for?

If I were in her district, and a principal, what I would do when I'm going to do a teacher evaluation, is I would go into the classroom, take a chair, sit in front of the room and study the students. Because I don't know how to make meaning out of teacher behavior until I see its consequences on the mission of learning. How could you for example, justify giving a teacher a

high mark on a lesson plan if the kids are all sleeping through the lesson? So, until you know whether it's impacting learning or not, you really are not in a good position to judge teacher behavior.

Well, all the system right now focuses on the teacher and teacher, rather than on learners and learning. We've got to shift that paradigm. So, my advice to leaders at district and school level is to begin to get your arms around the notion of we are in the business of learning, not teaching. And, begin to ask the question, "What describes best practices in learning, not teaching? And then begin to go with building systems that can support that. And I think that's where we need to be.

Nancy: Thank you, Dr. Lezotte. Scott, you can end our interview this month with your final comments.

Scott; Nancy, after listening to your interview of Dr. Lezotte this month, I can understand why he is considered one of the leading-edge thinkers in education today. His ideas about changing the paradigm from teacher-centered to learning centered fit very well with accountability and the emphasis on making a difference. I found myself taking many notes when I heard him speaker recently in Corpus Christi, TX. He has said in his workshops, among other things, that we have changed from compulsory attendance to compulsory learning. And 80% the problems in the schools are the result of the system, not the workers. I couldn't agree more.

In fact, it is harder and harder to justify – using any research or common sense – our current system of sorting kids by age, expecting they will learn the same material at the same time and testing them to see how much they learned, rather than how much they need to still learn. The trouble is most superintendents do not want to risk such a radical change in a system that will not punish continued failure but only new mistakes. Maybe that part of the system needs to be changed first. A final note – please visit our web site at www.audioed-online.com this month to continue the learning from Dr. Lezotte. You will find much more information about his work, ideas and the effective schools league. I couldn't think of a better

investment than joining the effective schools league – other than joining our electronic learning community, of course.

Web Resources Mentioned
1 Effective Schools League
   http://www.effectiveschools.com/league_detail.html
2 Alan Odden
   http://www.sagepub.com/Shopping/Author.asp?auid=520814
3 Financing Schools for High Performance
   http://www.josseybass.com/cda/product/0,,0787940607,00.html
4 Accelerated Reader
   http://www.renlearn.com/ar/default.htm
5 Office of Research in the US Dept. of Navy http://www.bmpcoe.org/
6 Bell Labs
   http://www.bell-labs.com/

Successful Schools: From Research to Action Plans

Willard R. Daggett, Ed.D.
President, International Center for Leadership in Education

Presented at June 2005 Model Schools Conference

The International Center for Leadership in Education was created in 1991 with the sole intent of assisting schools to move all students toward a more rigorous and relevant education. In recent years, that mission has been taken up by other organizations, including the U.S. Department of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Early on in our work at the International Center, it became quite clear that educators, policy makers, and the public would support our mission and believe in the importance of it for students' post-school success. The International Center's team of consultants thus worked to help school districts communicate the need for rigor and relevance in education to the community. A second observation we made was that curriculums are overcrowded. A rigorous and relevant curriculum would require some slimming down in the sense that those items deemed non-essential for students' post-school success must be removed in favor of content that is relevant and necessary for life and work. Removal of content from curriculum cannot be done hastily, however. Significant changes as such require good data. The International Center specializes in providing schools and districts with the data and methods to make the necessary changes that will offer students the best and most relevant education possible.

One point that needs to be made clear is that change is not required because the education system has failed. It needs changing because it is still based on a century-old model that did not emphasize a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students, but rather one that selected and sorted them. The world of today requires a different core of knowledge that all students need for success. The push of global competition, elimination of unskilled jobs, advancements in technology, and the demand for maintaining a middle class has led the public, media, and government to push for higher standards for all students. This is why change must happen in schools . . . and soon.

Research

With *No Child Left Behind* placing heavy emphasis on "scientific research," it makes sense to begin any discussion with the research base, and considerable research has been done on school reform. Seven meta-analyses have been done in recent years in an attempt to consolidate the findings of hundreds of projects. The following is a summary of the International Center's findings on each of the meta-analyses:

1. Ronald R. Edmonds, "Search for Effective Schools" NIE, East Lansing, MI. The Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University, 1981

   Dr. Edmonds was the leading researcher in school reform in the 1970s, and his work is still highly respected by education leaders. He created what is now known as the "effective schools model." Dr. Edmonds' research noted the five following characteristics of successful schools:

   - Strong administrative leadership
   - Focus on basic skills
   - High expectations for student success
   - Frequent monitoring of student performance
   - Safe and orderly schools

International Center for Leadership in Education

2. Jaap Scheerens and Roel Bosker, *The Foundations of Educational Effectiveness*, New York: Elsevier, 1997

   Scheerens and Bosker's work was well recognized and embraced in the mid to late 1990s. They did research on a wide variety of school reform initiatives and came up with eight essential characteristics of successful schools. The characteristics they identified were:

   - Monitoring of student progress
   - Focus on achievement
   - Parental involvement
   - Creating a safe and orderly climate
   - Focused curriculum
   - Strong leadership
   - Cooperative working environment
   - Time on task

3. "Key High School Reform Strategies: An Overview of Research Findings." U.S. Department of Education, 1999.

   For this report, a team of researchers studied the 300 most comprehensive school reform research studies done in the previous five years. The common characteristics they identified were as follows:

   - Commitment to high academic expectations
   - Small learning environments
   - Structure learning around career/student interest
   - Professional development focused on instruction
   - Tie out-of-school learning to classroom learning
   - Career and higher education counseling
   - Flexible, relevant segments of instruction
   - Assess on what students can do
   - Partnerships with higher education
   - Support alliances with parents and community

4. Robert J. Marzano, *What Works In Schools – Translating Research Into Actions*. ASCD, 2003.

   Robert Marzano reviewed research on school reform in his new book. The five characteristics he identified for highly successful schools were as follows:

   - Guaranteed and viable curriculum
   - Challenging goals and effective feedback
   - Parent and community involvement
   - Safe and orderly environment
   - Collegiality and professionalism

5. "High Poverty – High Success: Schools That Defy The Odds," Quick and Quick, Leadership Media, 2000.

   In June 2000, Drs. Doris Quick and Custer Quick, Senior Consultants at the International Center for Leadership in Education, did an analysis of five models of high achieving schools. They studied the

90-90-90 Schools, No Excuses Schools, Benchmark School Study, the Hope for Urban Education study, and the Beating the Odds study. They reviewed the characteristics that each of these major initiatives had found to be central to student success and established the following five overriding characteristics:

- A commitment to a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students
- Implementation of a testing program that evaluated both students' conceptual knowledge and their ability to apply knowledge
- A focused and sustained staff development program
- Commitment to addressing the issue of student behavior
- Willingness to make organizational changes for the benefit of students

6. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Education Reform Strategies – Foundation Definitions of Effective High Schools, Targeted Literature Review of Major Constructs and Their Components: Evaluating the National School District and Network Grant Program, 5/30/02.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has made a major commitment to school reform, especially at the secondary school level, following an extensive review of the research on the components of successful schools. The characteristics they identified as most important were:

- Common focus on a few research-based goals
- High expectations
- Small, personalized learning environment
- Respect and responsibility for all
- Parent/community partnership
- Focus on performance
- Effective use of technology tools

7. Lawrence W. Lezotte, Robert D. Skaife, and Michael D. Holstead, *Effective Schools – Only You Can Make A Difference*, All Star Publishing, 2002

In recent years, Larry Lezotte has picked up leadership on the effective school research that Ron Edmonds started in the 1970s. In his recent book, Lezotte noted the following as the most important characteristics of effective schools:

- Creating the school culture
- The correlates of effective schools
- Site-based management
- Data collection, disaggregation and analysis
- School improvement plans process
- Organizing schools for students
- Building community support
- Evaluation of student progress

A comprehensive analysis of this research yields ten central findings that I believe schools should use as a platform for success in their reform initiatives:

1. **Create a culture** that embraces the belief that all students need a rigorous and relevant curriculum *and* all children can learn.

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2. **Use data** to provide a clear unwavering focus to curriculum priorities that is both rigorous and relevant by identifying what is essential, nice to know, and not necessary.

3. Provide students real-world **applications** of the skills and knowledge taught in the academic curriculum.

4. Create a **framework to organize curriculum** that drives instruction toward both rigor and relevance *and* leads to a continuum of instruction between grades and between disciplines.

5. Create **multiple pathways** to rigor and relevance based upon a student's personal interest, learning style, aptitude, and needs.

6. **Set high expectations** that are monitored and hold both students and adults **accountable** for student's **continuous improvement** in the priorities identified in #2 above.

7. Sustained **professional development** that is focused on the improvement of instruction.

8. Obtain and leverage **parent and community** involvement successfully in schools.

9. Establish and maintain **safe and orderly schools**.

10. Offer effective **leadership development** for administrators, teachers, parents, and community.

Characteristics of Successful Schools

In 2004, through feedback from several schools we were working with, it became apparent that, though the meta-analysis research was valuable and appreciated, their most urgent need was a series of specific characteristics they could readily adopt that would help their schools in the short term. In turn, the International Center, in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers and with financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, conducted a study on the most successful high schools in the country, paying close attention to their feeder elementary and middle schools, to try to understand the characteristics that made them effective schools. This investigation provided **nine central characteristics of high performance in high schools:**

1. Focus instruction around students' interests, learning styles, and aptitudes through a variety of small learning community approaches—most commonly academies.

2. Administrators and teachers share an unrelenting commitment to excellence for all students, especially in the area of literacy.

3. An extraordinary commitment of resources and attention to ninth grade students.

4. A rigorous and relevant twelfth grade year.

5. A laser-like focus on data at the classroom level to make daily instructional decisions for individual students.

6. High-quality curriculum and instruction that focuses on rigor and relevance.

7. Provide students with adults with whom they can develop personal relationships and be allowed the opportunity to use reflective thought.

8. Focus and maintain professional development around a limited number of high-impact initiatives.

9. Solid and dedicated leadership.

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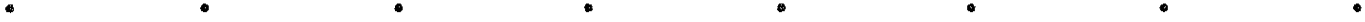
Effective Schools

David J. Kirk

Terry L. Jones

July 2004

Effective Schools

Introduction

Why do some public schools that educate students from disadvantaged backgrounds make a difference while others fail? A group of school effectiveness researchers have demonstrated that public schools can make a difference—even if their student body is comprised of students whose families have disadvantaged backgrounds. They have discovered that the successful schools have unique characteristics and processes, which, help all children learn at high levels.

Correlates of Effective School

Seven Correlates:
• Clear School Mission
• High Expectations for Success
• Instructional Leadership
• Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task
• Safe and Orderly Environment
• Positive Home-School Relations
• Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Unique characteristics of the majority of effective schools are correlated with student success. Because of this, these characteristics are called *correlates* by researchers (Lezotte 1991).

The correlates are the means to achieving high and equitable levels of student learning. It is expected that all children (whether they be male or female, rich or poor, black or white) will learn at least the essential knowledge, concepts and skills needed so that they can be successful at the next level next year. Further, it has been found that when school improvement processes based upon the effective schools research are implemented, the proportions of students that achieve academic excellence either improves, or at the very least, remains the same. (Association of Effective Schools, 1996)

The seven common correlates include: Clear school mission, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, opportunity to learn and time on task, safe and orderly environment, positive home-school relations, and frequent monitoring of student progress.

A Clear School Mission

Lezotte (1991) proposed that in effective schools "there is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability" (p. 6). Early on, this characteristic translated into a focus on the teachers, and how they needed to be able to teach all children both lower-level academic skills and higher-level cognitive abilities.

Haberman (2003) puts the onus on the principal to create a clear school mission. The principal should be a leader. To be effective in this role a principal should: "create a common vision, build effective terms to implement that vision, and engender commitment to task—the persistent hard work needed to engender learning" (p. 2). However, for teachers to be an integral part of the change process, they need to do more than blindly accept a principal's vision. "Too often schools are organized as administrative hierarchies rather than as groups of professionals working toward shared goals" (Cibulka and Nakayama, 2000, p. 4). Teachers should be partners with the principal in creating that vision (Cibulka and Nakayama, 2000), or they may even be the sole creators of the vision (Goodman, 1997).

By including teachers in the change process, a school is more likely to keep good teachers despite the traditionally high turnover rate among teachers early in their careers (Darling, 1997; Dunne and Delisio, 2001). Creating an atmosphere in which teachers are considered professionals and have opportunities to continue their professional development, both within and without the school they teach in, leads teachers towards excellence. This atmosphere, in turn, will help them lead the children to excellence.

High Expectations for Success

> In the effective school, there is a climate of high expectations in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can obtain mastery of the school's essential curriculum. They also believe that they, the staff, have the capability to help all students obtain that mastery (Lezotte, 2001, p. 7).

The effective school movement emphasizes teacher excellence, collaboration, and mentoring so that schools become "places where every educator is recognized as a valuable contributor with unique strengths and impressive potential to learn, grow, and improve" (Johnson, 1997, p. 2). The same approach is true for students.

> In high performing schools, students are given challenging curricula and demanding tasks, and they are expected to succeed. High performing schools regard every child as an asset. Moreover, each child is considered to possess a unique gift to offer to society (Bauer, 1997, p. 2).

Instructional Leadership

Schools need effective leaders to communicate the school's mission and vision. By persistently reinforcing the school's mission, the principal creates a shared sense of purpose and establishes a set of common core values among the instructional staff. Having common core values and a shared sense of purpose helps guide all members of the instructional team and avoids individuals straying from the intended goals.

> In the effective school, the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and continually communicates the mission of the school to staff, parents, and students. In addition, the principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program. Clearly, the role of the principal as the articulator of the mission of the school is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the school (Lezotte, 2001, p. 5).

The principal is not the sole leader; he or she is a "leader of leaders" (Lezotte, 1991, p. 3) empowering teachers and including them in decisions about the school's instructional goals. "In order to achieve significant changes in classroom practice, teachers must have an opportunity to participate in shaping a school's vision..." (Cibulka and Nakayama, 2000, pp. 5–6). Teachers work together with the principal to ensure that expectations for student achievement are understood across classrooms and across grade levels (School Redesign Network).

Critical Elements:
• Effective administrative leadership
• Positive expectations
• Strong, integrated curriculum
• Shared decision making
• Campus wide responsibility for teaching and success

Johnson (1997) suggests certain "critical elements" need to be in place for a school's leadership to be effective—to create an environment where "properly supported, students can learn and teachers can teach" (p. 3). He lists these elements as: *effective administrative leadership; positive expectations; strong, integrated curriculum; shared decision making;* and *campus wide responsibility for teaching and success* (pp. 3–4). These elements include the ideas that principals need to create a professional environment in which teachers can thrive in and contribute to the overall school goals and environment. The school's curriculum should not be ever changing but rather a steady element in a long-term goal of helping students gain the knowledge they will need to succeed in school and life.

Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Knowing what to teach and providing adequate time to teach are essential for effective instruction. Teachers and administrators must balance issues of increasing curricular demands with limited instructional time.

> In the effective school, teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential curricular areas. For a high percentage of this time, students are actively engaged in whole-class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activity (Lezotte, 2001, p. 9).

Lezotte (1991) suggests creating an "interdisciplinary curriculum" to teach the necessary skills in the least amount of time, making decisions about what is most important and letting go of the rest—what he calls "organized abandonment" (p. 4).

A Safe and Orderly Environment

In effective schools, "there is an orderly, purposeful, business-like atmosphere, which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning" (Lezotte, 2001, p. 6). Lezotte (1991) also spoke of schools not only needing to eliminate "undesirable behavior" but of teaching students the necessary behaviors to make the school "safe and orderly" (p. 1). Desirable behaviors would include "cooperative team learning," "respect [for] human diversity," and an appreciation of "democratic values" (pp. 1–2). Teachers must also model these desirable behaviors.

Positive Home-School Relations

In effective schools, "parents understand and support the basic mission of the school and are given opportunities to play important roles in helping the school to achieve its mission" (Lezotte, 2001, p. 8). However, because so many ineffective schools are located in low socioeconomic areas, many of the parents of the children attending these schools may not be able to support their children fully in their academic activities (Goodman, 1997; Johnson, 1997).

A good deal of the effective schools literature has focused on the need for schools to serve and educate not only the child but the entire family (Goodman, 1997; Johnson, 1997) and to include parents as a valued member of the school family (Revilla and Sweeney, 1997). Schools develop programs for parents in the evenings and on the weekends, the idea being that if the children see their parents valuing education, they will also value it. When this happens, "the kids settle down and get serious about learning, and then they achieve positive results" (Goodman, 1997, p. 6). The attitude is for schools to do whatever they have to in order to get the parents involved and strengthen the parent-child-school relationship. Parents "should be treated as respected partners who bring important perspectives and often the untapped potential to grow in their capacity to support their children's education" (Johnson, 1997, p. 2).

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

"In the effective school, pupil progress over the essential objectives are measured frequently, monitored frequently, and the results of those assessments are used to improve the individual student behaviors and performances, as well as to improve the curriculum as a whole" (Lezotte, 2001, p. 8).

In his paper, *Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation*, Lezotte (1991) cites that after what he terms the "first generation" of frequent monitoring of student progress is accomplished, schools will need to advance into a "second generation" of frequent monitoring of student progress. During the second generation, "the use of technology will permit teachers to do a better job of monitoring their students' progress. ...[T]his same technology will allow students to monitor their own learning and, where necessary, adjust their own behavior. The use of computerized practice tests, the ability to get immediate results on homework, and the ability to see correct solutions developed on the screen are a few of the available tools for assuring student learning" (Lezotte, 1991, p. 5).

Lezotte (1991) goes on to say that "in the area of assessment the emphasis will continue to shift away from standardized norm-referenced paper-pencil tests and toward curricular-based, criterion-referenced measures of student mastery. In the second generation [of frequent monitoring of student progress], the monitoring of student learning will emphasize 'more authentic assessments' of curriculum mastery" (p. 5). Lezotte explains that "this generally means that there will be less emphasis on the paper-pencil, multiple-choice tests, and more emphasis on assessments of products of student work, including performances and portfolios" (p. 5).

"Two new questions are being stimulated by the reform movement and will dominate much of the professional educators' discourse in the second generation: 'What's worth knowing?' and 'How will we know when they [the students] know it?'" (Lezotte, 1991, p. 5).

How Will We Know When They Know It?

"How will we know when they know it?" Pearson Inc. (Pearson) is answering that question with the development of Stanford Learning First™. Stanford Learning First™ will address the use of technology presented in Lezotte's second generation of frequent monitoring by the creation of web-based computer assessment. Stanford Learning First™ will offer the opportunity for students to engage in interim and benchmark assessment in a computer-based environment.

The interim assessments will provide a periodic tool to highlight learning opportunities and suggested corrective actions. The feedback from interim assessments will not only tell the student and the teacher which responses were correct and which were incorrect, but will also provide specific indicators of categorical misconceptions and strategy errors. These indicators are based on incorrect responses that can guide the selection and implementation of appropriate and effective intervention strategies. Through the use of innovative item design, students and teachers will be able to know more about the root causes of students' misunderstanding of a learning objective. With this information the teacher will be able to adjust instruction to meet the students' learning needs more effectively.

The benchmark assessments will serve as an indicator of the students' overall performance and knowledge base for the entire school year as well as likely performance on accountability assessments. With the benchmark assessments, teachers and administrators will be able to identify those students in need of additional instruction or instructional intervention.

Setting a common measurement of expectations ensures that all children are learning what's worth knowing and will not miss an opportunity to learn. By using criterion-referenced measures of student mastery, Stanford Learning First^{TM} will clearly measure learning goals defined by states and school districts.

Conclusion

During a time of increasing accountability, budget shortfalls, low and unfunded mandates, and high expectations, effective schools are becoming an important part of the educational landscape. The implementation of effective schools correlates will have great impact on the human capital of schools and society. Education centers will be able to teach students, regardless of their backgrounds; connect with the families of all students; and improve the working environment and professional status of kindergarten through grade 12 teachers and administrators. In the era of reform, effective schools are a viable path to recognizing, reaching, teaching, and assessing each child. Effective schools will create a generation that not only has proven their ability to attend class, but has also proven their proficiency of knowledge and skills essential for success. Pearson's Learning First^{TM} can support the transformation to an effective school by providing the assessment needed to guide students' learning and the assurance that students are performing to the highest level of expectation.

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WHAT'S NEW
Press Releases

Dr. Lawrence Lezotte Receives Council of Chief State School Officers' 2003 Distinguished Service Award

Contact:
Scott Montgomery
scottm@ccsso.org
202-336-7000

Washington, DC, November 3, 2003 - Dr. Lawrence W. Lezotte, national education consultant and commentator, will receive the Council of Chief State School Officers' Distinguished Service Award at its Annual Banquet to be held at the Westin Indianapolis on November 7, 2003.

"Larry Lezotte has devoted his career to helping schools educate all students," said Mike Ward, North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction and Council President. "His research on effective schools proves that we can do things much better than we used to. He has helped educators at all levels to think differently about school reform and he has changed the entire landscape of what we mean by continuous school improvement."

Known as the preeminent spokesperson for continuous school improvement based on effective schools research, Dr. Lezotte conducts workshops and conferences around the country. Through his research, Dr. Lezotte and his colleagues have been able to identify the characteristics of effective schools—schools where all students learn. These common characteristics have come to be known as the Correlates of Effective Schools. These correlates are now widely accepted as a framework for school improvement and are among the basic tenets of federal and state mandates for education reform.

In addition to his consulting activities, Dr. Lezotte has written widely on continuous school improvement. His writings include *The Effective Schools Process: A Proven Path to Learning for All* and *Sustainable School Reform: The District Context.* Most recently, Dr. Lezotte has published *The Correlate Book Series,* a collection of monographs on the Correlates of Effective Schools. Titles in this series include *Safe and Orderly Environment, Positive Home-School Relations, High Expectations,* and *Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress.*

The Council presents its Distinguished Service Award each year to outstanding Americans. Among previous honorees are U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts; Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League; Robert E. Slavin, co-director of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR) and chairman of the Success for All Foundation; former North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt; former American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker; and former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a bipartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

25th Anniversary Tribute Dinner

Dear Karen: We couldn't think of a more deserving person to honor than

Larry Lezotte. His work, his thoughts, and his ideas have been exrtremely

important to the hundreds of thousands of children, teachers, and

administrators his work has affected. For the Niagara Falls City School

District, Larry has been the defining factor in our district/school

reform.Through his leadership and with his advise, we have been able to

transform ourselves from an adult-centered school district to a

student-center district...where learning is for all...whatever it takes!

Carmen and I are so sorry that we will not be able to attend the ceremonies

and dinner so that we might also add our congratulations and recognotion

of

Larry in person. Please know, however, that our thoughts will be with Larry

and Ruth on Friday. We will always and forever be grateful to Larry for the

seminal work he has done and continues to do in the effective schools

movement, but just as important to us, we will forever treasure Larry as

our friend. We are looking forward to seeing Larry this summer in Chicago.

Cynthia Bianco and Carmen Granto

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February 22, 2008

Dr. Larry Lezotte

Dear Larry:

On behalf of all the practitioners who toil on our schools please accept my congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of the Effective Schools Conference. Although I am unable to attend in person, I want to be sure to express my appreciation for the great work you and all your associates, including Ruth, have done for American public schools through the Effective Schools movement.

Of all the near brushes with fame that we all have as public officials, I count the times that I have had the opportunity to attend your formal presentations and to have informal dinner or cocktail party conversations with you as among the highest. What comes through during all those conversations is your passion for doing great things for American school children, the depth of your expertise and knowledge about how public schools and public school people work, and your courage in taking on what needs to be confronted. I often tell people who are young in the business the story of how the Effective Schools movement was started and how huge an impact it has had upon our daily practice.

We all know that as educators we are known by the body of work that we produce during our careers. You have had a profound effect on American public education and helped many of us steer through the challenges of providing learning for all.

Congratulations again on the 25th Anniversary of the Effective Schools Conference and for the profound impact that you have had on all of our work and millions of school children.

Best wishes,

[signature]

James D. Mervilde, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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February 28, 2008

A TRIBUTE TO DR. LARRY LEZOTTE

I have known Larry Lezotte for about 30 years. Larry is a highly renowned educator who has kept his focus on the mission of "Teaching for Learning for All" and improving student achievement for over 40 years. His commitment to keeping abreast of current research on effective teaching is remarkable. Larry has consistently promoted the *Correlates of Effective Schools* and, finally, the federal government is using the core of the correlates through the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Maybe not as Larry would like, but the principles are being applied. Many of us, under Larry's guidance, have been doing for years what is now mandated under federal law.

Dr. Lezotte has helped our school district grow academically and to focus on the thing that matters most, student achievement. Larry has also been active in the State of Michigan with the Department of Education. I recommended Dr. Lezotte to be on a committee that sets standards for curriculum benchmarking, assessment, and cut-off scores for MEAP State test scores.

Larry is a people person and remains positive at all times. I remember Larry telling me that when you are trying to make positive change and run into folks who are not in favor of the requested change, keep in mind there are those who are against anything. He said, "Always remember that if these same people had been given the choice at birth, they would have probably declined." These words keep me going positively with our school improvement efforts, and help me hurdle obstacles that stand in the way of making our schools better for students and staff.

I'm sorry that I cannot attend the 25th Effective Schools Conference but my heart and thoughts will be there. I have thoroughly enjoyed my personal and professional relationship with Dr. Lezotte and Ruth. We all know that behind every good man, there is a marvelous woman: Ruth, that you are! Larry has been a good role model for me and many other educators. I sincerely hope that Larry will continue his work with Effective Schools and continue to help us make students successful.

Larry, you are great!

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Seese, Ed.D.
Superintendent
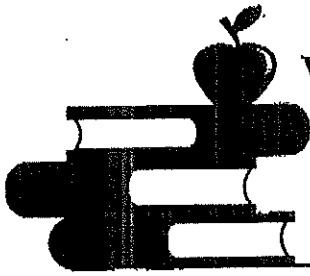
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Larry,

I sure wish I could be with you to celebrate your wonderful achievements over the many years. I owe so much of my educational success to your teaching me about the concepts of Effective Schools and to your inspiring me to strive to create a system that worked to make sure that all children learned each day and achieved at high levels.

You will probably never know the positive impact that you have had. You touched my life on a professional level because you inspired me to make "learning for all" a part of professional mission. You touched my life on a personal level by modeling how one should dedicate their life to a higher purpose.

Over the years I have tried to pass on what you have taught me and hopefully caused others to take up the banner for kids, all kids, and to strive to meet their needs so they have an equal chance for success in life when they leave our schools. More children that I can count have benefited from your teaching.

Without your inspiration and dedication to go wherever asked, this would not have happened. Thanks for all you have done for us practitioners. You have inspired us, cajoled us, embarrassed us to action, lead by example, and always managed to honor our humble efforts. I thank you for your wonderful service, and I encourage you to continue to inspire us to make even greater efforts for children.

Dr. Mark A. Higdon
Executive Director, Wyoming School Boards Association

A TRIBUTE TO LARRY LEZOTTE AND
25 YEARS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS IN ARIZONA
From
Larry K. Kelly

Greetings to all of you and especially Larry and Ruth Lezotte. I deeply regret I had an unbreakable commitment tonight to be out of town tonight. It truly is an honor and a privilege to recognize *the leader* of the effective schools movement over the past 25 years.

My experiences with Larry (and Ruth) span almost 25 years. I've had the privilege of working with Larry again these past five years during the training sessions he has conducted in Arizona.

My wife and I first met Larry in the mid 80's when I was director of curriculum and staff development in the Phoenix Union High School District. Our District had just closed 3 high schools, lost 10,000 students, and RIF'ed (laid off) 180 teachers. Needless to say, employee morale was the lowest in the history of the district. My wife was sent to a workshop at Michigan State University to hear Larry discuss what it took to turn a school around. She came back converted—a disciple—a believer -- as did the rest of the people from our district who attended the session.

The district summoned Larry who, for several years either during or after the effective schools conference, spent two or three days each year talking with our teachers. The results:

- Larry did more to revitalize our teachers than any other consultant at that time.

- Larry made our teachers and administrators believe in themselves again

- Larry presented a vision of what our schools and district could become

- Larry energized our teachers and staff

- Our teachers and staff identified with Larry for several reasons:

    his unique, conversational style of delivery

    his immediate command of the research

    his non-threatening, approachable manner

    his ability to express himself in terms to which the audience could relate

After attending his sessions, our teachers invariably would ask, "How do we do this at our schools?" I know because it was my job along with a couple of others in our District office to follow up with the school's leadership teams and work with them to develop strategies to implement what Larry had presented.

Larry Lezotte is the consummate, the ultimate professional.

Larry Lezotte is the commander and chief of the effective schools movement.

Larry also is a fierce competitor in golf. My record with him—2 wins 26 losses.

No one garners more of my respect as a professional and as a person than Larry Lezotte.

Finally, we respect Larry (and Ruth) for their honesty, integrity, and character.

Larry Lezotte is the most unselfish consultant I have ever worked with. He always has been willing to share information and materials with his audiences.

In our opinion, no team (the Lezottes) could be better to work with.

Larry—Cheryl and I congratulate you and thank you for your dedication to providing the motivation, the tools, and the belief that we can and will enable all students to learn—no exceptions.

Thank you for the memories and thank you for the example – the role model – you have been to and for all of us.

Testir   ̇ials

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS
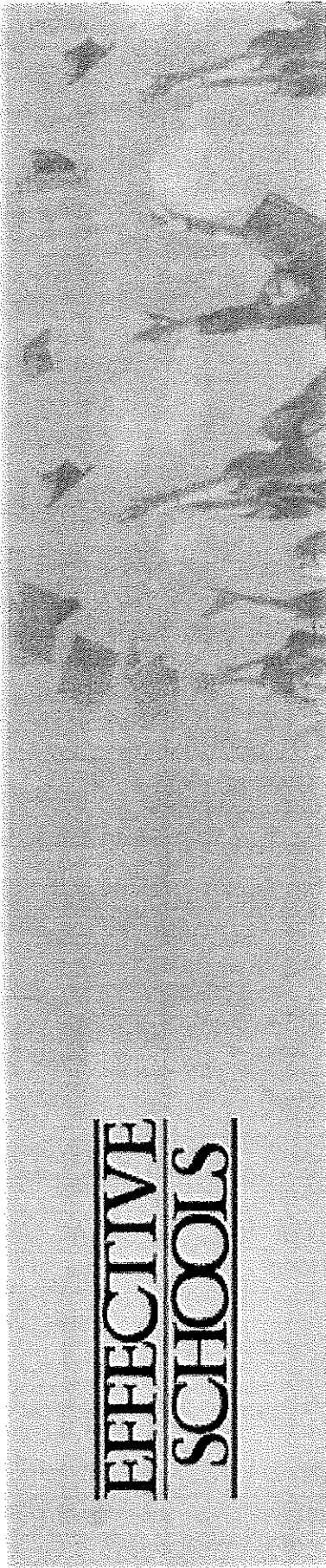
Testimonials

"Larry's work should serve as a prerequisite for every principal leadership program. The Assembly Required Implementation Guide has provided the tools necessary to mobilize staff in conducting continuous improvement within their schools. Principals participating in this

program have advocated that they are much clearer on their vision and can see results as they take a balcony view in organizational reform. Principals working with Larry were successful in making systemic changes within their learning organizations."

Olga Aleman
Program Manager, Professional Development Services

"Dr. Lezotte's workshops are always thought-provoking. I am always amazed at the updated research and resources that he provides the participants. His passion for achieving excellence and equity for ALL children is contagious. Having had him work with schools serving Indian students from across the country has definitly had some positive results.

From principals

- Wow! What a power-packed collection of content and strategies! What a good use of my time and my school's time. Thank you!
- Outstanding presentation by Dr. Lezotte. The information was right on target and I can begin to implement ideas immediately.
- Whew! So much information. I am exhausted; but is a good exhausted.
- Very worthwhile. Provide me with information to go forward."

Carmen Taylor
Executive Director, National Indian School Board Association (NISBA)

"Larry made our teachers and administrators believe in themselves again."

Dr. Larry Kelly
Retired Superintendent & Educational Consultant

"Dr. Larry Lezotte's unique, conversational style of delivery, immediate command of the research, and nonthreatening, approachable manner enabled our staff to relate to and identify with him."

Dr. Larry Kelly
Retired Superintendent & Educational Consultant

"Larry Lezotte provides educators the motivation, the tools, and the belief that they can and will enable all students to learn—no exceptions."

Dr. Larry Kelly
Retired Superintendent & Educational Consultant

"More children than I can count have benefited from Larry Lezotte's teaching."

Dr. Mark A. Higdon
Executive Director, Wyoming School Boards Association

"What comes through during a conversation with Larry Lezotte is his passion for doing great things for American School Children, the depth of his expertise, and his knowledge about how public schools and public school people work, and his courage in taking on what needs to be confronted."

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Testimonials

Dr. James D. Mervilde
Superintendent, Washington Township Metropolitan School District

"Dr. Lezotte has helped our school district grow academically and to focus on the thing that matters most—student achievement."

Dr. Jerry L. Seese
Superintendent, Saginaw Township Community Schools

"Larry Lezotte has been the defining factor in our district/school reform. Through his leadership and advice, we have been able to transform ourselves from an adult-centered school district to a student-centered school district...where learning is for all...whatever it takes!"

Dr. Carmen Granto
Superintendent
Ms. Cynthia Bianco
Deputy Superintendent, Niagara Falls City School District