

2015  
**A New Vision for Student Success**  
A Report From NEA's Accountability Task Force

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“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.

Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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I have served NEA as president for nearly a year and I've met thousands of educators. And they tell me the same thing that I've heard for as long as I've worked in education. I have said it countless times myself. NEA members are determined to ensure that all students are equipped with the resources they need, come to school ready to engage in meaningful learning, are taught by quality educators, and are prepared to confidently pursue paths that land them in colleges and careers—no matter who they are or where they live. Our public education system will be one that values success, keeps students as the top priority, and shares responsibility for learning. That's where we are headed and NEA is leading the way.

In 2014, NEA began framing this new vision for public school education. When we end the “test, blame and punish” system that has dominated public education in the last decade, we can focus on issues of opportunity and supporting student learning.

NEA leaders and members have created a visionary framework for a more effective system, fueled by success, and centered on improving student learning. Achieving it will require everyone who advocates and is responsible for students and their learning—educators, parents, principals, school counselors, families, and students—to do their part.

Ensuring this goal starts with universities preparing competent, caring candidates and licensing agencies credentialing only properly prepared professionals. Once hired, all educators in the school community need ongoing professional development and they must consider the needs of the whole child. Our goal



certainly requires elected officials to ensure schools can meet the needs of all students by providing the necessary resources to offer services and supports like health, nutrition and after school services for students who need it.

For more than a decade, the prevailing model called “Accountability” has been test and punish. Punish the student; punish the school; punish the educator.

It has turned into an excuse not to talk about the real issues of equity, access, and shared responsibility for the system.

Under the masterful leadership of Becky Pringle, we assembled a 19-member task force of our member-leaders and practitioners to begin the process of crafting our vision of shared responsibility. The charge to this team: truly consider what is the shared responsibility that we and others have for giving all our students what they need to succeed in the world; to think broadly and boldly about what's needed and include intentional, essential, and thoughtful proposals for inclusion and equity. Responsibility for equity has never been more important. For the first time in recent history, more than half of the students in our public schools are living in poverty and the public school population now has more students from minority backgrounds than ever before.

The debate around student achievement has been limited by the narrow parameters of *No Child Left Untested*. And we have a generation of students who have spent much of their school years preparing to fill in bubbles on a test rather than learning to solve problems, think creatively or independently. When students didn't hit the cut score on the standardized test, the system responded by stripping away

resources and firing educators who were vested in the community and knew the students and their families by name. During that time, any real discussions about the deep economic challenges that hold back millions of students across the country were ignored and overlooked. While resources were being cut, no one bothered to do anything to deal with many of the issues hindering student progress: hunger, poverty, inadequate medical care and often, homelessness. I know far too well that it's quite difficult for students to concentrate on syntax or equations when they are worried about where their next meal will come from or where they will lay their heads at night.

We cannot allow "Accountability" models to ignore *responsibility* for equitable resources. Walk into the most impressive, gorgeous public school you can find and you'll no doubt see a school outfitted with media centers, high-end STEM laboratories, a theater department, and a library full of new books. You know the schools. In these schools, there is a system in place to ensure student success—so students don't slip through the cracks. When a system works, every school should look like our very best schools. Yet, too often, just miles down the road from our best and most beautiful schools, you'll find students crowded into classrooms with no labs, no computers, and textbooks from a decade ago. Students in the schools down the

road and across town need and deserve a system that ensures they won't slip through the cracks.

We need a system that ensures, by design, that *all* schools are the kind of schools you would choose for your children. Our public education system must be designed so we can realize that value. When detractors say, "We can't afford that," three million voices of NEA respond: "We can't afford not to." I know the difference an education can make, and I know the quality of that education shouldn't depend upon where our students live.

I want to personally thank the brilliant Becky Pringle, who led this effort and guided our team. This document reflects her commitment, and the commitment of this team, to achieving our Association's mission of great public schools for every student.

Our students are counting on us and NEA is stepping up to the plate. But we can't do it alone. Our students' futures depend on the work NEA is doing to not only unite our members, but the nation, in order to overhaul the education system so it guarantees success for all students.

The time is now.

Our children can't wait.



Lily Eskelsen García

# I. Overview

## The Task Force Charge

The 2014 NEA Representative Assembly established the NEA Task Force on Accountability to “develop plans for a full system of public school accountability and support.” The Task Force set out to create a vision of accountability that reflects a shared responsibility to promote the equity and excellence each and every student needs to excel.

The existing structure and haphazard policies, masquerading as a system of accountability for schools, students, and educators, are broken. The consequences of our current reality are evident. The focus on relentless testing, labeling, and punishing has failed all students, most importantly those whom the current accountability system purports to help most: our poor children and children of color. Rather than tinkering with the current reality, this Task Force set out to replace it. It began this work by creating a framework for an aspirational vision to transcend the current narrow definition of “accountability.” This new framework is built on a commitment to equity and a core belief that every school and every student can excel.

The Task Force began its journey by outlining these three goals:

- ◆ Conceptualize an alternative accountability system based on shared responsibility to promote opportunity, equity, and excellence for all students;
- ◆ Set a new vision for education accountability to move beyond the current narrowly focused, punitive approach; and

- ◆ Back-map the strategies needed to build a bridge between our current reality and the desired aspirational vision of education success.

As the Task Force moved forward in crafting this new vision, it posed this compelling question: *What would an education system look like in which all students, educators, and public schools are successful and everyone knows it?* The Task Force’s considerations are deeply rooted in NEA’s vision of *Great Public Schools for Every Student* where *all* students are excelling, *each* student is excelling, and *everybody* knows it. For this to be true, educators will be successful, collectively and individually, and schools will succeed as institutions. The system will focus on the needs of the whole child so she comes to school ready and able to learn. Students will thrive only if educators, schools, and communities ensure their students have the supports they need and remove any barriers to learning, such as a lack of hunger, quality medical care, or inadequate housing.

NEA has long recognized that in order to support students, schools must reflect a strong and purposeful commitment to priorities addressed in NEA’s Great Public Schools Criteria and reinforced by other organizations’ initiatives, such as ASCD’s (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Whole Child Initiative.<sup>1</sup>

All of these factors influenced the development of the GPS Indicators Framework<sup>2</sup>, which spells out key criteria integral to school and student success and covers seven critical areas:

- 1) School Readiness; 2) Standards and Curriculum;

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wholechildeducation.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nea.org/gpsindicators>

3) Conditions of Learning and Teaching; 4) Workforce Quality; 5) Accountability and Assessments; 6) Family and Community Engagement; and 7) School Funding. NEA members recognize their work is part of a system of teaching and learning, and realizing this new vision requires a broadly shared, collective responsibility that extends to all stakeholders, including those in the larger community. They also recognize that improvement and growth come through systemic change, not through incremental meddling. Not surprisingly, stakeholders across the spectrum and throughout the nation are calling for a bold and aspirational transformation of public education.

### Building a Framework for Success

Imagine if all schools are welcoming, safe, and well-resourced places where parents feel confident enrolling their children, and well-prepared, supported, highly capable, and empowered educators are in every classroom and every part of the school building. The students in the school know their educators believe they can excel. The educators hold themselves, individually and collectively, responsible for student success and learning.

In these schools, *all* students succeed by meeting high standards of learning, and *each* student succeeds by maximizing his strengths and building on his interests and aspirations. In these schools, every educator succeeds by working collaboratively, sharing responsibility for delivering challenging, high-quality, aligned, coherent instruction in every classroom, and providing supports to students that reflect the intricacies of the school community. These schools succeed by not only providing opportunities for *all* students but ensuring equitable outcomes by closing learning gaps and meeting *each* student's needs.

To build toward a comprehensive accountability system, the Task Force considered how best to define, support, ensure, and sustain success while wrestling with many thoughtful and challenging questions:

*What does success for every student look like? How are educators prepared and supported for success? What do we do if a school is not successful? How will*

*everybody know when students, schools, and educators are successful?*

Through this process of exploration, questioning, and research, the Task Force developed a new paradigm that moves from the current system to one that embraces inspiration, innovation, responsibility, commitment, investment, assessment, and continuous improvement.

### Envisioning a New System

The goal of a new system offering a network of supports and sparking a culture of collaboration is compelling. *All* students excel: all groups of students in a given school, community, or state—and the aggregate of all of the students in the nation—grow, learn, analyze, and become critical, creative, caring human beings who thrive in a democratic society and a diverse and ever-changing world. *Each* student excels: each and every individual student achieves high standards and develops civic responsibility, perseverance, curiosity, and an appreciation for diversity, critical thinking, and compassion.

To be achieved, this vision—this aspiration—must be broadly embraced *and* broadly owned. All of the adults—teachers, administrators, and support professionals in the schools; family members, community leaders, and civic organizations; business leaders, elected officials, and policymakers; and the students themselves—play integral roles in the system's success. All have a responsibility to the system, and the system has a responsibility to each of them.

Fundamental to that responsibility is a commitment to the proposition that each student, and all students, can excel. There is no room for excuses or rationalization from anyone—student or adult, community member, or policymaker. Barriers must be dismantled; historical disenfranchisement must be rectified; disadvantages must be mitigated; disabilities must be accommodated; opportunity must be equalized; and support systems must be universal. It is only through this unequivocal commitment to both opportunity and outcomes, wholly embraced by all, that the vision becomes reality. Creating and ensuring

opportunity for all students is a civil rights issue and a social responsibility of this nation.

The shared commitment to success also requires a committed and collaborative approach to responding when the system doesn't work for students. The Task Force proposes a culture of investment. When we identify an educational need it becomes the stakeholders' collective responsibility to provide a solution and needed resources. This is sound systems-thinking applied to the education enterprise: do the "technical" work necessary to identify the elements needed to achieve the desired results. Then, if elements are either missing or malfunctioning, make the investment necessary to assess the challenges and provide the resources needed to ensure success.

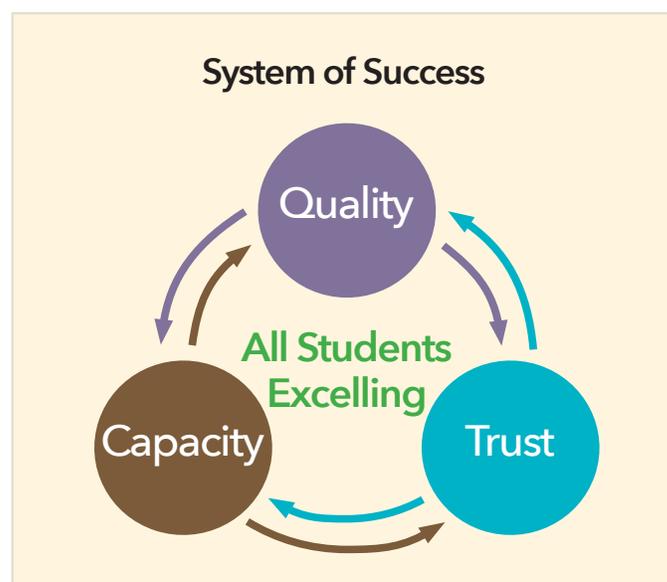
### Setting the Foundation for Change

Systems like the one described above don't develop simply by changing policy. They require a conscious and deliberate shift from cultures of punishment, toward adoption of a system of investment and support. The Task Force identified three key elements that serve as a foundation of a successful culture: quality, capacity, and trust. To better understand how all the pieces work together, imagine a positive reinforcing loop of student success and accountability.

Families and communities place their trust in schools, educators, and the profession. In turn, trust in educators and schools prompts the system to make a greater investment in the capacity of educators and schools. Increased capacity leads to enhanced quality, which results in better outcomes for students. For educators, increased quality leads to a better system for practicing their profession.

Quality, capacity, and trust strengthen a system where all stakeholders can succeed because they share responsibility for each other's success and professionalism. When students, educators, and schools are not succeeding, a well-constructed system works to quickly and efficiently identify what's lacking—quality, capacity, trust, or a combination of those. The system succeeds because it safeguards capacity, trust, and quality based upon an underlying premise that success isn't possible if any of these elements are undermined.

The underlying trust among all stakeholders allows for the creation of additional capacity and bolsters quality. This is not what happens in our current test-based, punish-and-blame system. The lack of trust leads to, at best, a wariness to invest and, at worst, the stripping of resources necessary to increase capacity. Without increased capacity, quality cannot improve. As the current system is under-resourced and further fractured by distrust and failure, there are few opportunities to recover. Quality, trust, and capacity are the foundation of a successful system.



*The Task Force's vision of a successful system places students at the center with quality, trust, and capacity as the foundational elements.*

What's needed is a new way of thinking about how best to ensure a system of success and sustainability for students, educators, and schools. It starts by recognizing the strengths of students, educators, and schools. The good news is that educators know real success in public schools requires all stakeholders to place student needs at the center of all efforts. The work of this Task Force is an important first step by the Association to drive change and begin constructing this new system. This 19-member Task Force convened to lay the foundation for this critical work.

## II. Student Success

The Task Force aspires to a model of excellence and shared responsibility where student opportunity is not limited by the neighborhood in which students live or the restrictive expectations of others. Successful students possess the critical thinking skills necessary to become engaged, informed, and productive citizens.

In the current system, when student achievement lags, the response has been to strip away resources or authority. This is a distorted “incentive,” resulting in restricting resources to those students with the greatest needs. Such a strategy too often perpetuates a downward spiral in achievement, further eroding trust, slashing capacity, and all but eviscerating quality. It creates what the system envisioned in this report would not tolerate: an environment in which under-resourced schools, with the most need, are more likely to have resources cut and autonomy curtailed, creating a situation where success is too often the exception and not the norm.

Today’s 50 million public school students are young and diverse and live complex lives. Nearly half are students of color. Nine percent are English language learners; 13 percent receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. Half of today’s students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Two percent—1 million public school children—are currently homeless.<sup>3</sup>

Every one of these students should be enrolled in a high-quality school that welcomes, supports, and

makes learning meaningful for each and every child. Every school should have the ability to recognize, reinforce, and develop students’ academic strengths and interests. Every school should spark student curiosity, encourage creativity, and teach and offer opportunities to practice critical thinking skills. Every school should have the capacity to recognize when a student struggles and why—and to tailor solutions to his specific needs.

A student’s ability to excel means that no doors have been closed to her: her education should prepare her to become a lifelong learner and to succeed in all her post-secondary endeavors. For this goal to become reality, students, educators, and schools must be trusted and have the needed capacity for success.

### Defining Success: Framing a System of Student Success

The system we envision for student success exists within a culture and climate that is grounded in high expectations for all students. The basic requirements of this system are that all students’ needs are met—subsistence needs, such as adequate healthcare, food, and clothing, as well as academic needs for strong instruction, relevant and empowering content, and high expectations for academic excellence.

Meeting *basic* needs should be a given. But, in this envisioned system, students’ needs would also include enrichment—opportunities for exploration and

#### Footnotes

<sup>3</sup> Source for all statistics except homeless students: National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics: Most Current Tables. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp). National Center for Homeless Education. National Overview: Consolidated State Performance Report. Retrieved from: <http://nchespp.serve.org/profile/National>

discovery to expand their worldview. Additionally, the complexity of students' lives would be acknowledged as assets. Issues that stem from inequity, racism, segregation, and poverty would be openly acknowledged and addressed by schools without stigmatizing students.

All educators have high expectations for every student in this system. The expression, "I believe every child can learn," is more than just a common slogan in education circles. All educators embrace this core belief: *every student in the school can and will excel*. While there are countless examples of educators already living by this ethic, in the system the Task Force envisioned, it is expected that every adult must hold and act on this belief as a fundamental component of her professional practice.

Educators work where the need for their skills and experience is greatest. For example, novice teachers would not be disproportionately staffed in the least affluent areas. *Every teacher in every school must have the support, training, capacity, and skills to provide quality instruction and create opportunities for every student to be successful.*

The climate in schools is focused on collaboration, and being responsive and respectful of students' cultures and background. Every school employee is invested and responsible for each student's success. The school environments are welcoming. The diversity of the students, families, and communities they serve are authentically celebrated, respected, and valued.

Students in such a system would have access to a broad choice of academic programs and extracurricular activities. Integrated learning would be the norm and every school would offer a wide range of high-quality academic options and outside-of-school co-curricular programs.

## Indicating Success: How Do We Know When Students Are Successful?

The single greatest indicator of a successful system is the degree to which the students are equipped for success upon graduation. Each student will have multiple and varied opportunities for success in school, life, and work. Throughout a student's academic career he will be offered a wide array of academic and extracurricular opportunities to stimulate and feed his interests.

Learning is measured against widely accepted standards as well as an individual student's learning plan and goals. The student has been empowered and provided the tools to make good choices. His options are only limited by what he chooses, not by dearth of opportunity, lack of preparedness, limited information, or the perception that she cannot achieve.

To achieve this end-goal, successful students will:

- 1. Have equitable access to quality professionals and a positive learning environment.** All students have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for success. The system recognizes that while common goals and standards are in place, the pathways for achieving those goals are as unique as the students they serve.
- 2. Own their learning.** School is not "done" to them, rather students are empowered and entitled to engage in their education and advocate for themselves. They know they will receive both enrichment opportunities and other assistance required to help them be successful. Successful students use critical thinking and problem solving to make connections between their own learning and the real world.
- 3. Develop and identity for themselves as learners.** That identity is cultivated over the course of an academic career to move the student from an excited learner, to self-advocate, to critical thinker, to engaged student who poses questions and seeks to find answers.

**4. Connect with educators in the school who know and advocate for them.** Students will have opportunities to communicate with and make strong connections with individual school staff. Staff will have time to collaborate with colleagues and share insights about student assets, challenges, motivators, and growth areas so all educators in the school can better engage individual students.

**5. Recognize the value of education in applying what they've learned.** They are respected and appreciated as whole people. School has taught them fundamental skills like resiliency, collaboration, creativity, and the values of social and emotional intelligence. Critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, as well as appropriate uses of new technologies are valued as much as the content-specific subject matter.

**6. Position themselves for future success in college, career, and democratic citizenship.** The results of district- and school-level assessments provide families and educators with tools to monitor academic progress and achievement of their students. More importantly, the primary consumer of test results must be the students themselves as they set appropriate goals and inform the instruction they receive. These individual assessments include: classroom tests and quizzes, oral assessments, performance-based assignments, portfolios, and written evaluations. As students advance through their academic careers, they are coached and expected to solve problems individually and together with their peers in order to foster teamwork and consensus-building skills.

In the Task Force-envisioned system, we know that each student is successful based on the examination of multiple sources of evidence. Equal attention is paid to improvement and academic growth as well as a student's development as a learner. Such collection of data informs instruction and maximizes learning.

Examples of these multiple sources of evidence should include traditional measures, such as formative and summative assessments of learning, but also must include more holistic measures, such as student attendance and behavior records, participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, and developmental assessments.

Additionally, measures are utilized to ensure that all groups of students, particularly students living in poverty or those from traditionally underserved populations, are successful. One way to do this is via a "sampling assessment" in which a sample of students, rather than every student, takes an assessment and outcomes are compared across groups. If discrepancies among segments of populations are identified, additional resources are added to the system to fuel improvements.

Ensuring the success of every group of students involves more than administering and acting on sampling achievement measures. It also involves ensuring other equitable outcomes for learners, including, but not limited to:

- ◆ Participation in high-quality early education programs and full-day kindergarten;
- ◆ Engagement in a rich variety of subject matter, including art, music, social studies, science, world languages, and physical education;
- ◆ Success in gateway courses such as Algebra I, world languages, and technology literacy;
- ◆ Ongoing growth as indicated by grade point average (GPA);
- ◆ Enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses;
- ◆ Acceptance in higher education and post-secondary training programs; and
- ◆ Success in gaining post-graduate employment.

Lastly, all student assessments must be aligned with instruction. Assessments provide an opportunity for schools and educators to assess academic progress, adjust instruction based on outcomes, and develop a

comprehensive individualized instruction plan. States and districts set their own schedules, but generally the performance-based component will be given at the appropriate time over the school year so the data can inform instruction. In the Task Force's new system, district-level assessments that align with the state college- and career-ready standards also would be paired with school-based programs, strategies, and interventions for closing achievement gaps by addressing factors specific to the school—economic, social, and environmental.

Student growth and progress would be gauged by multiple sources of evidence in which students demonstrate progress toward meeting their learning objectives. Those objectives would be aligned to grade level and subject standards. Regular formative assessments guide instruction and show progress toward meeting those goals. Nationally normed tests would be given only to ensure there are not groups of students who are underserved or falling behind. These tests would not be used as instruments of punishment for students, educators, or schools.

### Facilitating Success: How Should We Respond When Students Are Not Yet Successful?

Personalized, individualized, and differentiated learning plans are necessary for each student to follow his own path toward meeting common goals and standards. Each student has a learning objective developed to ensure that he leaves the system ready for college, career, and democratic citizenship. Educators help guide students along their individual paths. Students focus on achieving benchmarks during the school year. As needed, those milestones are modified when a student meets the established standards.

The importance of students participating in co-curricular and after-school activities is recognized by all. These activities are viewed as meaningful ways to keep students well-rounded and invested in their own educational experiences and are no longer considered just *extra*-curricular.

**Interventions and Strategies.** When students are struggling, they are *paired with well-prepared educators* to help address their specific needs. The pairing must start with the adults in the school whom students trust and with whom they connect. The educators are responsive, supportive, and qualified to work with diverse populations. They must be able to motivate and advocate for these students to ensure more learning time and resources. It must be noted that for these strategies to work, there must be enough educators who, through their experience, have demonstrated their expertise in reaching



struggling students, and that as part of the school self-assessment (see School Success chapter), these needs will be identified.

**Families as Partners in Student Success.** Engagement with parents and family is an integral part of educating students. Family involvement is enormously valuable in getting to know students, the supports they need, their interests and motivators, and the assets and talents they bring to learning. Families are integral and valued partners in designing individual learning plans for students, and their perspectives will be folded into the educational planning.

Schools and educators must explore indicators and increase home communication when students begin to struggle or miss benchmarks. For example, truancy, behavior, and classroom disruptions may impact a

student's academic performance. In response, parents and guardians are provided resources so they can take advantage of additional supports and services to address the root causes for these behaviors. In addition, schools increase academic supports.

A new system aimed at meeting student needs must be inclusive and intentional. Every student, regardless of where he lives, is ensured a local school that is equipped, resourced, and staffed to prepare him to chart his own course for success. In many cases, that means focusing on meeting the wide range of complex issues facing historically underserved students and communities as we work to build capacity, trust, and quality in the system.

### **Ensuring the Success of All Students: How Do We Assure the Success of Historically Underserved Groups?**

For the first time in recent history, half of the children in the nation's public schools come from low-income households. Deep economic inequalities continue to hold back millions of American students while grinding poverty stifles opportunities to thrive, learn, and excel.

A new system requires bold, practical strategies to ensure the educational success of all students, *especially* those who are the most vulnerable and underserved. This is achievable when all educators collaborate for students' success, create culturally responsive learning environments, and provide resources suited to individual student needs. These needs differ by student. For one child, it could mean receiving a pair

of prescription glasses; for another, it might be the opportunity to participate in musical theater.

Learning communities can support student success by:

- ◆ Equipping and staffing all schools so students have more one-on-one attention, inviting classrooms, and a well-rounded curriculum;
- ◆ Providing all students with learning opportunities that begin by age four, safe schools, small class sizes, and modern tools and textbooks;
- ◆ Partnering with social, art, religious, government, and community service organizations to provide services like nutrition, healthcare, and cultural experiences for students and their families; and
- ◆ Making local schools places where students want to learn and families are welcomed, comfortable, and proud to participate as a member of the school team.

In the current system, far too many marginalized and vulnerable students languish instead of aspiring to pursue the American Dream. These students need additional resources for access to high-quality curriculum, courses, and instruction aligned with demanding standards. Society must not be timid or miserly about providing these resources. The investment is necessary to overcome decades of neglect. Poverty does not doom students to a substandard education, but it serves as a substantial barrier to opportunity and excellence. The Task Force vision is that of a system where students excel *because* of their learning environment, not in spite of it.

## III. Educator Success

Every student deserves to have a team of educators that cares for, engages, and empowers learners; provides challenging instruction and supports; and enlists the entire school community to ensure student success. The Task Force calls for a *system* that supports excellence from preparation, to entry into the profession, and through a continuum of professional development. For educators to meet the needs of all students, they also need to have shared support, continuing professional development, and the time, resources, and tools necessary to deliver and support high-quality instruction. The new vision—a system of shared, mutual responsibility—is founded on the premise that educators are ultimately responsible to students, to their colleagues, and to the profession, and that the profession itself will maintain the highest standards and expectations.

The Task Force researched and discussed the educator role(s) in this aspirational vision from a holistic perspective, understanding the variety of interdependent roles of all of the adults in the school system. In completing this report and crafting recommendations, however, the members realized they did not have the research, expertise, or collective experience to adequately tackle the work of every different educator role. Accordingly, one Task Force recommendation calls for additional research to fully address the roles of education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, administrators, and higher education faculty and staff. The Task Force recognizes that a complete vision of a new and aspirational system will emerge only by thoroughly and thoughtfully delving into distinctive role

of educators. This means developing systems of growth and support for all educators within all of their various roles. While most current efforts relating to systemic requirements for educator success refer primarily to teachers, this chapter attempts to outline the systems and requisite needs for all successful educators.

### Defining Success: What is a Successful Educator?

All educators must have standards of practice relative to their roles that reflect what they should know and be able to do. The standards serve as a foundation for all growth as well as a way to ensure that those practicing the profession are performing at a high level.

NEA has developed a system of nine job groups for education support professionals (with 60 job subgroups) to reflect the essential roles these educators play and to help increase understanding of the diverse roles that education support professionals have in the lives of students. The nine job families are:

1. Clerical Services
2. Custodial and Maintenance Services
3. Food Services
4. Health and Student Services
5. Para-educators
6. Security Services
7. Skilled Trades
8. Technical Services
9. Transportation Services

Education support professionals in all of these categories have made addressing the needs of the whole child an essential part of their work—helping to make sure that students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. <http://www.nea.org/home/61830.htm>

For teachers, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' Five Core Propositions serve as a powerful guide to define successful teachers as those who:

- ◆ Are committed to students and their learning.
- ◆ Know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- ◆ Are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- ◆ Think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- ◆ Are members of learning communities.<sup>4</sup>

These propositions are a foundation for supporting successful teaching upon which standards of practice and professional principles can guide growth and development.<sup>5</sup> These standards outline the essential knowledge, performance, and dispositions that serve as measures of educator growth and attainment.

Critical among these standards is an educator's skill, knowledge, and ability to work with students from diverse cultural, economic, and racial backgrounds. Essentially, educator cultural competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. This understanding informs and expands teaching practices in the culturally competent educator's classroom. Cultural competence is a developmental process that occurs along a continuum.

This process should begin, at the very least, when a person is studying to become a teacher. Successful educators understand the role of language and culture, and know how to incorporate learners' experiences and cultures to enhance instruction and advance student learning.

## Facilitating Success: What Do Educators Need to Be Successful?

A professional continuum that facilitates growth and development throughout an educator's career is at the heart of our vision of support for successful educators. The NEA Professional Standards and Practices Committee describes this continuum in the Principles of Professional Practice. Rather than viewing each educator as the same, or all educators as a single group with common needs, this continuum acknowledges educators have different needs based on their role and at different stages of their careers. Every education professional—a teacher, a librarian, a counselor, a para-educator, an administrator, or a bus driver—should have a set of clear and meaningful standards of practice and career growth opportunities allowing them to continually improve their practice and contribute to students, schools, and the education professions.

An educator growth continuum is not linear or hierarchical. Educators grow and improve on various dimensions of practice at different rates and in different ways. An educator may be very accomplished in some standards of practice and still developing in others; growth, learning, and improvement are career-long endeavors.

Over the last few years, there have been considerable efforts to design professional growth continuums for teachers such as the one outlined below. These growth continuums can and must be developed and implemented for all of the education professions, including education support professionals and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (such

### Footnotes

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nbpts.org/five-core-propositions>

<sup>5</sup> Such as the Model Core Teaching Standards developed by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

as school counselors and social workers). Systems of growth for other educators should be similar to teacher growth, and those educators must define and build these growth models.

**Professional Growth Continuum for Teachers.** For teachers, the five components of the professional continuum are<sup>6</sup>:

- ◆ **Induction Phase:** from preparation through earning full state licensure and becoming a teacher of record;
- ◆ **Provisional Phase:** from becoming a teacher of record to demonstrating the necessary skills, practices, and experience to reach “professional status”;
- ◆ **Professional Phase:** from “professional status” throughout teaching career unless a teacher voluntarily moves to the next stage; and
- ◆ **Accomplished Phase:** when a teacher has met the highest standards of practice and is sharing skills, knowledge, and expertise with colleagues.
- ◆ **Leadership:** developed and practiced throughout the phases of career growth and has its own set of standards, skills, and knowledge (e.g., a teacher could be in a professional phase of practice and be a teacher leader).

This system offers teachers multiple avenues for growing and advancing in the profession. These phases are not static, and they interact dynamically with a wide array of skills and knowledge that educators develop throughout their careers. Educators develop varying levels of expertise in different dimensions of practice based on school and student needs and personal development choices. Teachers know what is entailed to move from one career phase to the next. The path is part of a clearly articulated system and, most important, these career phases are embedded in a system of support that relies heavily on peer-to-peer interaction and access to professional resources.

All educators need such pathways for professional development and growth. Support professionals, specialized instructional personnel, and administrators alike will benefit from a complementary career continuum, including clearly defined requirements for entry and progression along with peer-driven mentoring and support.

### Preparing for Success: How Are Educators Prepared?

A system supporting high-quality educators begins with comprehensive preparation. For *teachers*, preparation must include a college degree in their content area, followed by a residency that immerses aspiring teachers in the practice and places them under the supervision of accomplished, master teachers who provide mentoring and support. *Other education professions* will require related skills and knowledge, followed by an apprentice-like process and peer review.

Strengthening initial entry into the profession for teachers includes efforts to:

- ◆ Make the teaching profession appealing to youngsters long before they reach college;
- ◆ Ensure that preparation programs provide realistic and high expectations of the profession and reveal the complexities and challenges of teaching;
- ◆ Strengthen expectations for programs to develop candidates’ capacities to teach nationally accepted standards and to work with diverse learners—including economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and English language learners;
- ◆ Invest in collaborative partnerships between schools, preparation programs, and communities designed to offer high-quality clinical preparation experiences for candidates through models such as residencies and professional development schools;
- ◆ Evaluate candidates’ readiness to teach and lead

#### Footnotes

<sup>6</sup> NEA’s Professional Standards and Practice Committee outlined a full and comprehensive teacher career growth continuum in its 2010, 2011, and 2012 reports.

through performance assessments and feed results back into programs for reflection and improvement;

- ◆ Leverage higher quality preparation through performance-based accreditation that examines program results; and
- ◆ Support high-quality induction by training and supporting the time for mentors to work closely with aspiring and beginning teachers.<sup>7</sup>

In all education professions, preparation will be founded on the essential question, “What does the educator need to know and be able to do in order for students to excel?” The preparation system requirement is to answer that question *and* provide the necessary sustained collegial support.

### Supporting Success: How Are Educators Supported?

A community of peer educators and the union/ Association support an educator’s career and practice, starting with an educator’s initial entrance into the system. A system of high-quality performance, mutual support, and shared responsibility includes these elements:

- ◆ A clear and consistent plan for educators to grow and learn across their professional continuum;
- ◆ Authentic, shared, collective accountability rather than accountability that is punitive and imposed externally;
  - Educators are supported by their peers
  - Educators understand what peers, administrators, and the education community expect of them
- ◆ A culture of shared, collective responsibility exists where low performance is not tolerated;
  - An educator who is no longer successful causes their school and education community to suffer

- ◆ Performance goals for educators and students that are formative and ongoing; and
- ◆ Educators who have demonstrated quality practice and reached the professional phase participate less frequently in a summative evaluation process or when/if significant problems arise from formative assessments.

### Indicating Success: How Do We Know Educators Are Successful?

The Task Force’s new vision is one that offers opportunities to improve educator practice through empowerment, authority, collaboration, and transparent instructional practices. This system is explicitly designed to address areas of challenge *and* development, and the built-in support structures and processes are intentional. This creates a peer-to-peer lateral or relational accountability and allows educators to move out of a supervisory-driven paradigm and into a more professional model. In this system educators are responsible to students, peers, their colleagues, and to the profession.

Elements and practices required in this system include:

- ◆ Utilizing the collective expertise and professional judgment of peers to help students and educators succeed and excel;
- ◆ The core belief that the success of *every* student is the responsibility of *each* educator. This includes all adults in the school building—administrators, school counselors, and other education support professionals as well as teachers who are empowered and motivated to do their jobs well for the students they serve;
- ◆ All stakeholders understanding the value of educator leadership, and teachers and all school staff are responsible to each other for achieving excellence in the profession and success in the classroom;

#### Footnotes

<sup>7</sup>This list is adapted from Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. Retrieved from <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/accountability-college-and-career-readiness-developing-new-paradigm.pdf>.

- ◆ Participation in constant and regular peer observations—colleagues and peers give and receive feedback; and
  - Use of Professional Practice Rounds (or Instructional Rounds for teachers) is a practice designed to look at instructional practice in focused, purposeful, systemic, and collaborative ways. When properly implemented, this practice serves to improve instruction by:
    - Identifying successful or promising practices;
    - Identifying clear problems of practice;
    - Observing practice in multiple classrooms/ work settings and collecting descriptive, non-evaluative data about practice;
    - Meeting in observation teams to describe what was seen; and
    - Brainstorming the next level of work to determine what can improve practice and contribute to the profession.
- ◆ Supporting new educators through peer review processes:
  - Strong quality control at entry to the profession;
  - High-quality evaluations of new teachers' practice;
  - Professional growth plans and personnel decisions;
  - Support for novices from accomplished and master teachers;
  - Mentoring and support for early career teachers and;
  - Professional, non-instructional time during the school day to facilitate these activities.

### Sustaining Success: How Do We Ensure That All Educators Continue to Succeed?

In a culture of shared responsibility and lateral accountability, low performance is unacceptable. When new educators are provisionally certified and hired they've proven themselves profession-ready. When educators graduate from their provisional phase to the professional phase, they have exhibited

a level of knowledge, skills, and experience expected of the profession. Nonetheless, some educators may have difficulties later in their career and face challenges in their practice. The goal of the Task Force-envisioned system is to minimize the time that an educator struggles by providing the support leading to improvement or, if that is not successful, helping an individual to leave the profession. Support and interventions include:

- ◆ Peer observation and support;
- ◆ Opportunities to observe colleagues;
- ◆ Professional development;
- ◆ Improvement plans;
- ◆ Sufficient time, support, and assistance to meet standards; and
- ◆ Collaborative exit process for educators who have demonstrated chronically poor performance and have not improved after reasonable time and support.

If schools experience a cycle of poor quality, it signals a systemic problem, not a personnel problem. High standards for entry and completion of preparation programs will give some guarantee of the "profession-ready" status; supportive induction and evaluation processes for the novice ensure that only those who meet professional qualifications are granted professional and continuing status. It is the role of the professionals—through their union and in collaboration with local, state, and national leaders—to refine and restructure the system when necessary to ensure quality.

Implementing a high-performing system of shared, mutual responsibility and support requires all parties to be prepared and willing to make the necessary investments. The professionals must be prepared and willing to intervene if poor performance is chronic. This vision cannot be realized without adequate investment or by taking short cuts. It requires resources—a sustained commitment of time, people, and funding. These are the ingredients required for students and educators to be successful.

## IV. School Success

A system of excellence and shared responsibility relies on individual school success. The United States is home to some of the best public schools in the world; the problem is that we have created a system where success precipitates success, while failure too often precipitates further failure. To break the negative cycle, we must fundamentally change the ways we resource our schools, the manner in which we define success, and the methods we use to identify and correct problems.

Our current system presumes that what causes some schools to be successful and others to fail is a difference of discipline, attitude, will, habit, or desire. This model has resulted in ever-widening gaps between our best and our most struggling schools. Rather than incentivizing success and dis-incentivizing failure, the current system rewards affluence and punishes poverty.

Many of our nation's most successful schools have abundant and high-quality resources; these resources, when used well, serve as a solid foundation for providing an excellent education to students. While there is not a perfect correlation between a community's wealth and the quality of its public schools, many of the public schools in the wealthiest American neighborhoods are among the most trusted in the world. The confidence policymakers and community members have in these schools leads them to be rewarded with more and better resources and entrusted to use these resources well, creating the capacity necessary to produce a high-quality education. In turn, the success of these schools leads to even greater trust in them.

Sadly, the reverse is also true: struggling schools lose the trust of the community and public officials. Schools that are not trusted are deprived of capacity—both in terms of resources and decision-making power, which results in declining quality and, ultimately, declining trust. While we can hold up our best schools as models for success, the public education system has not accomplished its ultimate goal if success is out of reach for *any* of our public schools.

In order to break this cycle we must move from *accountability* based on labeling and punishing to *shared responsibility* based on supports and resources that contribute to and ensure the success of students, educators, and public schools.

In so doing, parents, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders must take into account the needs of the whole child to ensure that schools can address all of a student's strengths and needs. NEA's GPS Indicators Framework<sup>8</sup> is based on the seven Great Public School Criteria.

1. Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs, so they come to school every day ready and able to learn.
2. High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.
3. Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.
4. A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.
5. Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.

### Footnotes

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nea.org/gpsindicators>

6. Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement.
7. Sufficient, equitable, and sustainable funding.

NEA believes these criteria will prepare all students for the future with 21st century skills; create enthusiasm for learning and engage all students in their learning; close achievement gaps and raise achievement for all students; and ensure that all educators have the resources and tools needed to ensure student success.

NEA's framework is closely aligned with ASCD's Whole Child Framework<sup>9</sup> which features the following tenets:

- ◆ Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- ◆ Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
- ◆ Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- ◆ Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
- ◆ Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

Schools implementing this whole child approach use collaboration, coordination, and integration to make sure the changes are systemic and sustainable.

### Defining Success: What is a Successful School?

Successful schools are places where parents want to send their children and where children want to be. Students feel safe in successful schools—physically and academically—so they can challenge themselves and grow. Students enter successful schools ready to learn and they exit prepared for their next life endeavor. In successful schools, educators and education are respected and knowledge, challenge, and discovery are joyfully and purposefully pursued. Schools are successful when students and educators are successful. Successful schools model democratic

processes with shared decision-making and multiple venues for input and dialogue. This all means we must move away from schools that are forced to focus on meeting testing mandates toward schools that give students the educators, resources, and environment necessary for each and every student to excel.

There are many ideas about how to define school success, but this Task Force defines successful schools based on the following:

- ◆ **Everyone in the school community holds and is held to high expectations.** In successful schools, everyone—students, educators, administrators, families, and communities—share a culture of high expectations. The entire school staff understands that part of their shared responsibility is to believe and demonstrate that *all* students can learn and excel. Additionally, everyone in the school community holds themselves and others to those expectations through processes that are collaborative and growth-oriented, rather than isolating and punitive.
- ◆ **The school climate is conducive to teaching and learning.** Successful schools create a safe and supportive learning community in a well-maintained and up-to-date facility where all stakeholders (students, educators, administrators, families, and communities) feel welcomed, engaged, trusted, heard, and valued.
- ◆ **The academic environment is well-rounded, high-quality, and inclusive.** In successful schools, each and every student is able to meet her potential, and ensuring student success is the primary focus for all stakeholders. Curricula for all students and across all disciplines—core subjects and electives alike—are aligned with high standards focused on depth and meaning. Appropriate and aligned assessments are used for their intended purposes.
- ◆ **Leadership is supported and distributed.** In successful schools, formal “leaders” are skilled educators with the knowledge, expertise, and

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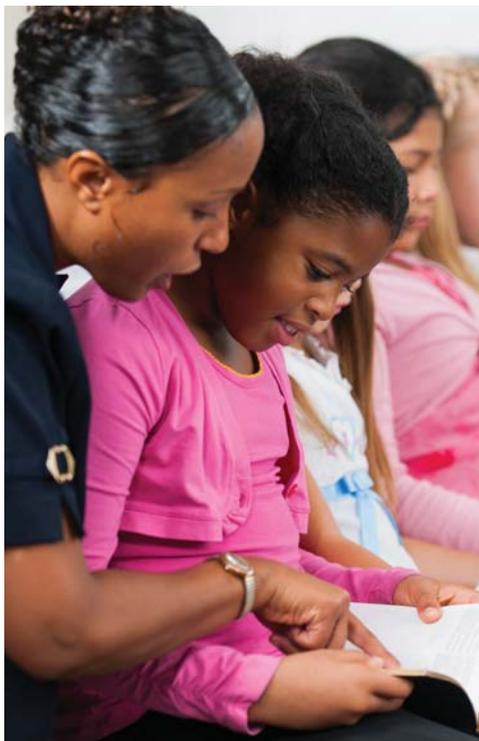
<sup>9</sup> <http://www.wholechildeducation.org/>

aptitude to support a high-performing culture and atmosphere. Educators throughout the building share leadership with each other, students, and families to collaborate when making decisions impacting student learning and school operations.

## Facilitating Success: What Do Schools Need to Be Successful?

Sustained success for all schools is a big vision. Schools cannot be expected to achieve the Task Force’s definition of success without adequate resources and supports—such a big challenge cannot be met on hard work and will alone. Investments must be targeted, sequenced, and in keeping with the needs of the particular school community. If local, state, or national policy fails to ensure alignment and adequacy among standards, curriculum, resources, and assessments, sustained school success becomes virtually impossible. Schools must have:

- ◆ **Well-prepared, committed, and caring staff.** This includes all adults in the school building—administrators, teachers, education support professionals, and special instructional support personnel (such as school counselors, speech and occupational therapists, nurses, and social workers). These adults must be empowered to do their jobs well for the students they serve.
- ◆ **Reliable and appropriate streams of revenue and resources.** States and districts must guarantee each school a sufficient resource foundation with appropriate adjustments for school level, school size and location, variation in costs across regions, and student characteristics. By “sufficient,” we do not mean bare-bones; instead, these



resources must be abundant enough to meet the educational, physical, and emotional needs of each and every student. In addition, schools and districts should be supported in their efforts to diversify funding streams by pursuing grant money and other community revenue sources, efficiently allocate and use resources, and craft sustainable, multi-year budgets. Districts and states should be supported in ensuring that resources are distributed in a manner that allows *all* schools to help *all* students be successful.

- ◆ **Access to a trusted professional support system.** Rather than being required to solve their problems in isolation, school communities should have access to a rich network of peer and expert supports to help them work through professional issues. Working with this support system should be viewed as part of an ongoing process of collaborative inquiry and growth, rather than invasive punishment for low performance.

## Indicating Success: How Do We Know Schools Are Successful?

While evidence of student achievement and growth is critical to determining whether a school is successful, there is a range of far more meaningful and actionable success indicators that have

been lost in the overemphasis on standardized test scores as a primary indicator. The model we propose would be richer than the current system, and would provide a more accurate picture of whether a school is succeeding. It also strengthens the focus on shared responsibility, which requires policymakers to share the weight of accountability with the school community and the local and state agencies that shape the contexts in which teaching and learning occur. Finally, it relies

not only on standard quantitative measures, such as attendance rates and other measures of student success, but also on regular surveys of educators, students, and community members, so that the voices of those who are part of a school community are heard in the accountability process.

**All students are expected to reach their full potential.**

All students can excel, and the schools they attend and their educators must insist that they reach their full potential. All educators must demonstrate a belief that all of their students can succeed and that attitude must be pervasive throughout the school. The presence of high standards for all students can be detected by:

- ◆ Internal and external reviews of the curricula, assessments, and other resources used by a school to support student excellence;
- ◆ The majority of educators reporting alignment and coherence among standards, curriculum, resources, and assessments, and indicate that these are sufficient for all students to reach high expectations; and
- ◆ Valid surveys of educators, students, and parents about the expectations a school holds for its students and how it supports students in achieving these expectations.

**The school climate is conducive to student learning.**

Students must feel their schools are desirable and safe places to be and learn. This is indicated by a range of indicators, such as:

- ◆ **School and community safety records.** Schools cannot be desirable places to learn unless they are safe. Students must have a safe, reliable, and secure way to get to school, and they must feel physically and emotionally safe while they are on school property. Students also must feel free from bullying and harassment. Additionally, the school buildings and facilities should be modern, up-to-date, clean, and in good working order with healthy indoor air quality.
- ◆ **Student learning conditions and educator working conditions.** Students must learn in conditions conducive to their success. Students'

learning conditions are educators' working conditions. Specific components could include rates of bullying and harassment as well as rates of attendance. For example, one part of the equation is whether students and staff attendance rates trigger further inquiries about the school's potentially problematic learning and working conditions or if there are community factors that make attendance challenging.

- ◆ **Measures of student, parent, family, and community engagement.** Districts and schools must find recurring opportunities to engage students, families, and communities to make sure they are welcoming places where parents, caregivers, and community members want to invest their time and energy. A school is successful when students, staff, parents, and community members want to be a part of the school community and take responsibility for supporting the school as a critical foundation of the community.
- ◆ **Behavior and discipline records.** Student behavior and discipline trends also indicate whether a school is a desirable place to be and learn and further indicate the kind of school culture promoted on campus. Schools where students are disproportionately disciplined based on factors such as poverty and race, are typically places where the students do not feel supported, and where school staff may need additional professional development to help find alternative ways to address unfamiliar or inappropriate behavior. Furthermore, zero-tolerance school discipline policies have done more harm than good, pushing students out of the classroom at unprecedented rates. Successful schools use restorative justice practices to keep students in school, and create an environment of respect, caring, and collective responsibility.

Schools actively address the social/emotional development and health of students and have school-based processes in place to help students in areas such as anger management and conflict

resolution. Additionally, successful schools implement multi-tiered systems of support, such as positive behavior intervention plans, which are more inclusive of all students, make schools safer, reduce instructional hours lost to discipline, and promote positive social and emotional skills.

Many of these indicators will be measured and tracked with parent, educator, community, and student surveys. These surveys will provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence of whether a school is a safe and desirable place to be and learn. Student surveys will reveal whether students believe there are adults at school who care about each student's success and who treat them fairly. Parent and caregiver surveys will indicate whether parents and caregivers feel listened to and included. Educator surveys will allow schools to determine if staff feels empowered and engaged. Community surveys will give evidence of a school's place in the community—whether the school is respected, inviting, and serving its community well—and whether the broader community believes it shares responsibility for school success.

**Students have access to a well-rounded, high-quality, and inclusive academic environment.** The primary purpose of schools is to educate students. In order for a school to be successful, it must provide well-rounded academic courses that are inclusive, challenging, and help each student to reach his potential. As an example of what a well-rounded curriculum means for students, the Task Force recommends the following types of offerings:

- ◆ In elementary school, all students would have access to high-quality early education programs and full-day kindergarten. Additional indicators of elementary school success include student access to a rich variety of courses, including art, music, social studies, science, world languages, and physical education.
- ◆ Students in successful middle schools must have access to gateway courses, such as Algebra I, world language, and technology literacy as well as a well-rounded curriculum that includes music and art. Students need a variety of challenging,

integrated, and relevant courses that are aligned to their goals, social-emotional support to help them navigate class, peers, and life, as well as opportunities for engagement and leadership.

- ◆ Success indicators for high schools would include access to advanced coursework and postsecondary courses, such as AP or IB classes, dual enrollment in high school and college courses, college gateway math and science courses, other courses recognized for post-secondary credit and high-demand industry certification programs. Successful completion of this type of coursework would help accurately ascertain whether students are prepared to transition successfully into the adult world.

**Using multiple sources of evidence.** As discussed in more depth in the chapter on Student Success, student learning and growth is best assessed using multiple sources of evidence. These include portfolios, team projects, and diagnostic assessments conducted at appropriate times during the academic calendar so educators can use these measures to intervene and tailor instruction to each student's needs. Under such a comprehensive strategy, assessments are:

- ◆ For learning—to inform and guide instruction;
- ◆ Of learning—to measure student learning and growth; and
- ◆ As learning—to support students in reflecting on their learning and developing future goals.

In each instance, assessments are fair and authentically evaluate each student's knowledge and progress. Regardless of the type of evidence, success is indicated when students from all backgrounds are excelling and when achievement gaps are closed. Data on a broad spectrum of student success measures should show little or no gap between poor and affluent students.

It is important to stress that these indicators might not point to specific problems in a school or to the need to implement specific solutions. Rather, tracking and analyzing these indicators is meant to help school communities and school and district leaders determine

where problems may exist and facilitate guided inquiry into root causes and possible interventions. For example, a school with a declining attendance rate may, through a collaborative inquiry process, determine that the root cause is a lack of classroom engagement, students' concerns about safety making it to/from school, or student health issues. Each of these root causes points to a different course of action, despite being identified by the same indicator.

### **Sustaining Success: How Do We Ensure That All Schools Continue to Succeed?**

The above indicators provide a comprehensive blueprint for measuring and tracking school success. These indicators will allow leaders to check on schools and identify, as early as possible, where schools need to improve and in what ways. Taking this comprehensive approach will help leaders gain a better view of which indicators are correlated, and where action, resolution, and resources need to be directed in order to help a school sustain success. The Task Force emphasizes that the nation cannot sidestep the resource requirements. It will continue to be both unethical and destructive to create a blueprint and fail to provide for the infrastructure. School success depends on making and keeping a commitment to equity and excellence.

Our proposed system is based on a progressive approach to provide additional supports to schools with the greatest needs. By collecting data on indicators linked to school success, school communities, districts, states, and the public will be able to see whether a school is successful or if a school needs to engage in deeper inquiry and receive additional supports to get on track. In this system, data and evidence are used not to punish or blame schools but to focus resources, support, and other interventions to ensure growth and success. This dynamic of building capacity is essential to developing the levels of trust needed to ensure an open, transparent, and consistent assessment of school and student growth.

**Annual review for all schools.** All schools will be responsible for providing data on a set of key indicators

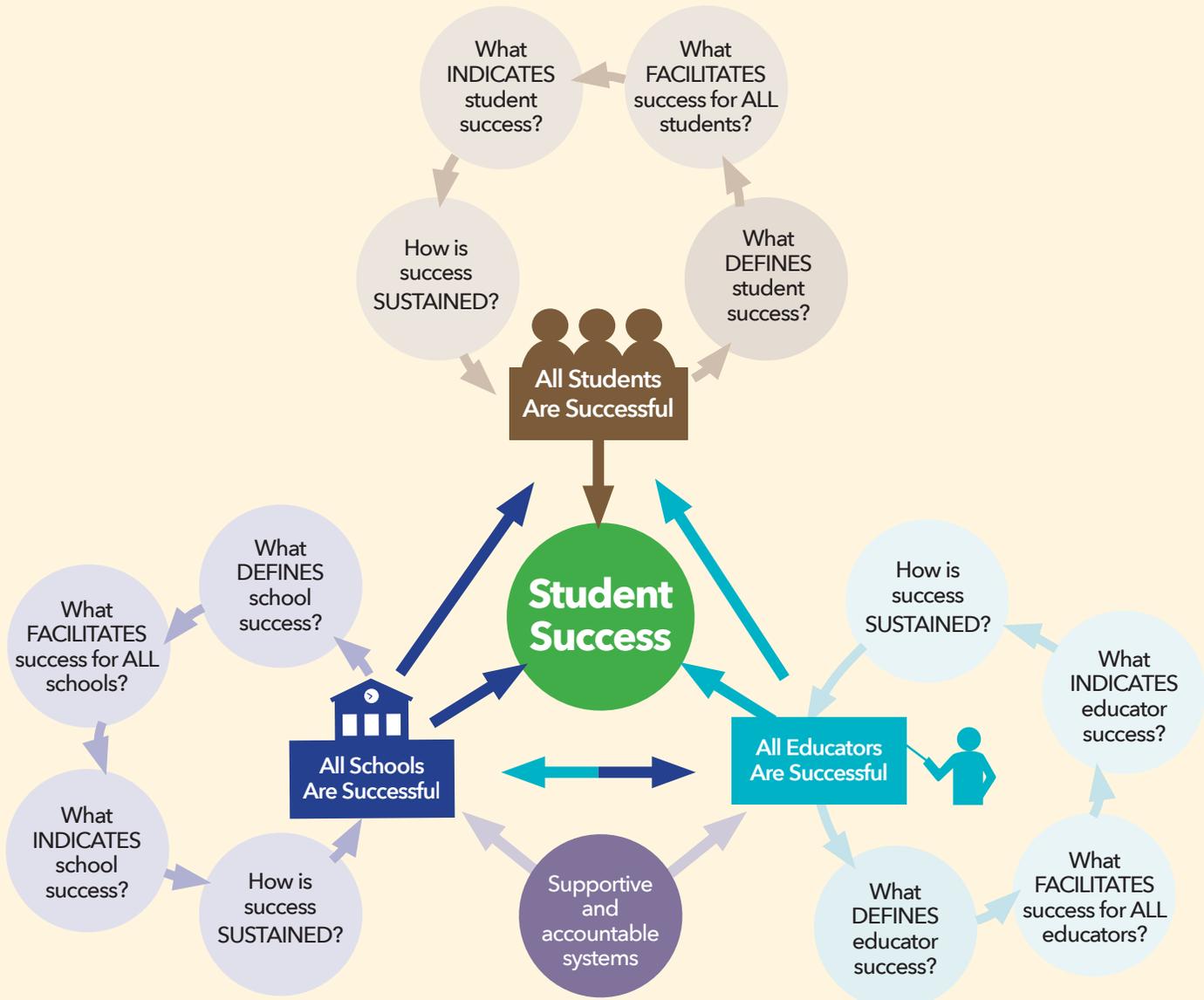
each year. Schools will be encouraged to build on their successes and may self-select for additional supports depending on their level of need. Annual review of a wide range of indicators will allow schools to take early action before small issues become big problems.

**School-based, school-led inquiry with external support.** When schools have either identified an issue they would like to work on or have an indicator showing a potential problem, they will enter into a process of school-based, collaborative inquiry to determine the root cause(s) of the issue(s) and, if they choose, will have access to an external support network to help them in the inquiry process and in selecting and implementing any corrective action(s).

**School-based, externally led inquiry with external consultation.** When/if schools show widespread and/or significant issues, these schools will enter into a process of school-based inquiry, with the help of an external facilitator, to determine the root cause(s) of the issue(s). They will then consult with a trusted external support team to decide on a course of action and develop a plan and a system for evaluating success. Educators in these schools must "opt in" to this plan—if they do not, they may transfer to another school.

The accountability system the Task Force proposes will break the cycle of blame, distrust, and punishment currently plaguing our public schools. Rather than starving struggling schools of resources and forcing them to narrow their curricula to meet narrow standards of success, in the Task Force's vision, challenged schools are showered with support and recognized for providing a rich palette of offerings to their students. Instead of assuming a school's educators are the "problem," the Task Force's vision starts with the assumption that the educators in a school are the people best prepared to diagnose the root causes of a school's struggles and generate solutions, as long as they have access to trusted experts to provide advice and support. The goal is having schools that are trusted to do what is best for students, have the capacity to do so, and provide the highest quality education to each and every student.

# What would a system look like in which all students, employees, and schools are succeeding, and everyone knows it?



## V. Conclusion

### Building the Bridge: From Current Reality to Desired Future

One of the most significant challenges for the Task Force was to think beyond the current reality of today's failing policies, persistent injustices, and blatant attacks on schools, educators, and students. Yet, members challenged themselves to be aspirational—to imagine a world that doesn't yet exist, but can become tomorrow's reality when all educators work toward the NEA mission: "To unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world."

Just as NEA's mission has done, the Task Force abandoned today's narrow concepts of "achievement" or "effectiveness," to embrace a broader, more meaningful vision of "success": success for every school, for every educator, and for each and every student.

The description of success offered in this report certainly has some elements of what might be called accountability. However, it offers a far more inclusive picture of systems in which *shared responsibility* focuses not on labels and consequences but on building professional communities that support quality, take full advantage of the flexibility to innovate, and foster continuous growth and improvement. This report has elements of what might be called effectiveness. Though, it offers a far more robust picture of how the professional practice of all educators delivers *meaningful outcomes* for students. The student outcomes defined in this report have elements of what might be called achievement. Yet, it offers a far *richer*

*and more complete picture* of the skills, knowledge, dispositions, and character students need to help their communities and our country grow and thrive.

The Task Force offers this new vision for education accountability—one in which all students, schools, and educators are succeeding, and everyone knows it.

### From Vision to Action

There is a Japanese proverb that says, "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare." America's students and educators are awakening from an education nightmare, replete with unfulfilled promises and false hope. Now, NEA and its members must embrace a *vision* for change and we must take clear, decisive *action* to shape the future of public education.

Our members stand ready to combat systems that violate their students' right to learn and then blame educators for that failure. NEA members must now prepare for the key roles they will play in the implementation and success of a new system of education. Every educator has a role and must act: if you teach students; if you support teachers; if you prepare teachers; if you drive the buses; if you serve the food; if you counsel the students; if you lead schools; if you keep the records; if you maintain the facilities; if you keep the students safe—then you are an *educator* and you have a primary leadership role in fulfilling the promise of public schools. Educators hold themselves responsible for actions, for work, for the education profession, *and* for results. NEA must carry out its role

as an unrelenting advocate, focused on making certain that all parties with responsibility for the system meet *their* responsibility.

As this document illustrates, NEA and its members cannot make the changes needed alone; educators do not bear sole responsibility for the future of education. Shared responsibility means many people and groups with active roles in this process will need to help change the ways our system supports students, educators, and schools. Yet, NEA and educators across this country can and must lead.

The Task Force calls on NEA to lead a broad coalition of stakeholders to craft and advance a visionary system of success. NEA must ensure that the work to support this system continues within our existing structures, and we must create the mechanisms and processes necessary to fully design and implement the system.

NEA and its partners must employ proven indicators of success and draft appropriate policy where necessary. The Association has a heavy responsibility and a leading role in bringing forth an aspirational vision to ensure student, school, and educator success. As stated in the preamble to NEA's mission: "Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us". The recommendations that follow this report offer a launching point for these efforts, though they are by no means exhaustive or complete. The Task Force is honored by the trust bestowed and looks forward to continuing the journey alongside fellow educators toward great public schools for each and every student.

## VI. Recommendations

To begin building the bridge from our current accountability frame to our aspirational vision, NEA should:

1. Establish a diverse coalition of education stakeholders, including parents, community agencies, civil rights organizations, students, policymakers, school and district administrators, and educators to create and advocate for a system of shared responsibility for student, educator, and school success. As part of this coalition-building process, NEA should also:
  - ◆ Explore multiple and varied funding opportunities to support an ambitious agenda of policy, program, and practice for student, school, and educator success;
  - ◆ Explore the development of authentic measures of student success (knowledge, skills, dispositions, and affective development) that ensure equity and are appropriate levers for school, district, and state advocacy; and
  - ◆ Explore establishing formal partnerships with other education organizations for the purpose of advancing this work.
2. Continue the work of the Task Force through workgroups, existing committees, or other venues for the purposes of:
  - ◆ Deepening the knowledge and understanding of the roles of education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, higher education faculty, and school and district administrators in the development and implementation of a vision of shared responsibility;
  - ◆ Designing components of a new system of responsibility, based on the ideas in this report; and
  - ◆ Advocating for the aspirational vision outlined by the Task Force.
3. Use the GPS Indicators Framework and other success indicators referenced in this report to build a “School Success” tool that includes clear indicators of school, student, and educator success. This tool could be used as a self-assessment instrument for both individual schools and districts so they can better measure and share success. It could also provide a framework for identifying the system supports needed to increase success.
4. Craft a policy statement for potential introduction at the 2016 NEA Representative Assembly, calling for a public school system in which *ALL* students are prepared for, have equitable access to, and are included in high-quality early education programs, a rich curriculum at all grade levels, and advanced coursework in high school, such as AP, IB, honors, and rigorous industrial and career certification.
5. Convene a panel of experts, primarily comprising educators, to map out strategies to bridge the gap between our current reality and our aspirational vision by exploring how educator support and recognition systems can grow to align with meaningful professional continuums, such as those outlined in this report. In addition, design professional continuum models for educator

groups in the ESP and specialized instruction support personnel education support professionals job families.

6. By September 2015, present an Action Plan to the NEA Board of Directors, outlining short- and long-term strategies on how the vision and recommendations offered in this report will become an integral and meaningful part of the NEA agenda, including:
  - ◆ Identifying policy or program changes within NEA to facilitate work on the Accountability Task Force Action Plan;

- ◆ Researching implications for NEA's 2016-18 Strategic Plan and Budget;
- ◆ Developing tactics and plans to partner with state and local affiliates to determine best ways to leverage collective resources to achieve this vision;
- ◆ Creating a list of actual or potential partners for the national coalition outlined in recommendation 1; and
- ◆ Outlining plans for public reports, conferences, or other activities to promote the vision and recommendations of the Task Force.



**Front Row (left to right):** Kevin Gilbert, Robin Curtis, Sharon Gallagher-Fishbaugh, Clara Southerland, Becky Pringle, Lee Edward Campbell **2nd Row:** Marisol Garcia, Sherry Tucker, Bob Williams, W. Gerard "Jerry" Oleksiak **3rd Row:** Michael Alston, Earl Wiman, Janet Stramel, Kathy Vetter **Top Row:** José L. Vilson, Eric C. Heins, David Wilkinson, Ron "Duff" Martin, Justin Fox-Bailey  
*Not Pictured:* Keith Gambill

## VII. Task Force Bios

### Michael Alston

Currently working as a middle school social studies and high school driver education instructor at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice, Mr. Michael Alston is a member of the South Carolina Education Association. His core expertise includes working with at-risk and middle school students. He is a National Board Certified Teacher.

Mr. Alston believes NEA's work to create a new framework and vision of accountability for students, schools, and educators will help ensure a united voice on this important national issue. By curtailing the potential for ambiguity, schools can spend more time and energy on achieving goals that should matter most to everyone—successful students, schools, and educators.

Prior to joining the Department of Juvenile Justice staff, he served as a middle school math teacher in a local South Carolina school district. Previously, he was a U.S. Army Supply/Chemical Officer before becoming an educator.

Mr. Alston holds a master's degree from the University of South Carolina in education administration. He earned a doctorate in educational leadership from South Carolina State University.

### Lee Edward Campbell

Director of the Knox Central High School in Barbourville, Ky., Mr. Lee Edward Campbell is a member of the Kentucky Education Association and has held several leadership positions at the state and local level. In addition, Mr. Campbell is a member of the Kentucky Music Education Association.

A founding member of Kentucky's Teacher Effectiveness Steering Committee, Mr. Campbell has been working for the last five years on the state's new teacher evaluation system.

Mr. Campbell received a master's degree from Union College in Barbourville where he studied education with an emphasis on choral conducting. He also earned his bachelor's degree in music and education from Union College.

### Robin Curtis

A sixth grade science and language arts teacher in a predominately Native American school, Ms. Robin Curtis currently serves as a teacher leader/trainer for the new South Dakota Student Learning Objectives. She also serves on the South Dakota Commission on Teaching and Learning. The commission redesigned the South Dakota teacher evaluation model and helped develop the principal evaluation model.

Ms. Curtis says it is imperative to create a new system of accountability because the current system fails students when resources are taken away. She says the system must provide more support than ever before so that students simply cannot fail. Ms. Curtis believes the teaching profession must be renewed because each and every student matters, and all students deserve the best regardless of where they live.

Ms. Curtis has assisted in completely redesigning the South Dakota framework for teaching model, which serves as the new teacher evaluation/accountability model for South Dakota. She is a Smarter Balanced Teacher Ambassador and a member of NEA's Common Core Committee.

## Justin Fox-Bailey

A high school English teacher from Washington state, Mr. Justin Fox-Bailey is a 20-year veteran of the classroom. A demonstrated leader in all areas of instructional leadership, Mr. Fox-Bailey worked with his school district to initiate a new evaluation program and taught the new evaluation framework to administrator/union teams. He also has worked with the state of Washington and Washington Education Association to help evaluate the state's new accountability system.

Mr. Fox-Bailey says educators can advance a vision of support for every child and every community that goes beyond an outmoded and impoverished reliance of tests. He says being part of the conversation of the NEA Accountability Task Force has been a challenging and transformative experience, and NEA can be a leader in shaping a means of support that honors each and every child, in each and every community so that all children have the opportunities to which their families aspire.

Mr. Fox-Bailey currently serves the Association in several capacities, including president of the Snohomish Education Association and president of the Pilchuck UniServ Council. He is on the board of directors for the Washington Education Association and he is a member of the WEA Executive Committee.

## Sharon Gallagher-Fishbaugh

Known to her second-grade students at Salt Lake City's Dilworth Elementary School as "Mrs. G.," Ms. Sharon Gallagher-Fishbaugh has more than 36 years of experience working in Utah public schools.

Ms. Gallagher-Fishbaugh says the responsibility for the success or failure of the public education system has been entirely placed upon the shoulders of America's educators for too long. She says teachers know that education is a collaborative endeavor affected by many factors: student readiness, adequate resources, and authentic job-embedded professional development, to name a few. She believes accountability is expected from all entities with some responsibility for learning conditions in America's public schools.

Ms. Gallagher-Fishbaugh currently serves as president of the 18,000-member Utah Education Association, and is a National Board Certified Teacher. The NEA Foundation recognized her in 2010 as the nation's top educator, receiving the NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence. She currently serves as a commissioner of the Accreditation Council for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

Ms. Gallagher-Fishbaugh earned her bachelor's degree from Loretto Heights College in Denver and her master's degree from National University in La Jolla, Calif., and she is a member of the National School Reform Faculty.

## Keith Gambill

A middle school music and drama teacher from Evansville, Ind., Mr. Keith Gambill is vice president of the Indiana State Teachers Association. He also serves as chair of the education support professionals (ISTA) Foundation for the Improvement of Education (IFIE). He has taught in Evansville public schools for 26 years.

Mr. Gambill says the local level of Association work is the direct touch point to members, and through that work educators can have the greatest positive impact on improving public education. He says he hopes to advance the work of the NEA Accountability Task Force as he travels across Indiana to work with teachers and ESPs.

Mr. Gambill is the teacher representative to a committee appointed by the Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction to help review the Indiana School Accountability Law and rewrite a new accountability system that fits the state's current methods of testing and evaluation. Mr. Gambill is a member of NEA's Common Core workgroup.

## Marisol Garcia

An eighth grade social studies teacher, Ms. Marisol Garcia is a teacher-leader in her school, focusing on creating a culture of teacher leadership. She is using advocacy and organizing to help her school district create new policies that are student-centered and instruction-focused.

Ms. Garcia believes the work done by the NEA Accountability Task Force reaffirms that educators and education professionals are the key to transforming American schools into the hub of great change. She says respect of the education profession as a whole is essential to achieve truly great public schools. Ms. Garcia hopes the new framework will be used, received, and implemented nationally to ensure great public schools for every child in the United States.

A member of the Arizona Education Association Board of Directors, Ms. Garcia chairs NEA's Legislative and Government Relations Task Force. She is chair of the Ethnic Minority Caucus, and she serves as the Western Director of the NEA-Hispanic Caucus.

### Kevin Gilbert

A former social studies teacher, coach, and administrator with the Clinton Public School District, Hinds County School District, and Rankin County School District in Mississippi, Mr. Kevin Gilbert also has worked as a substitute teacher and bus driver with the Jackson Public School District.

Mr. Gilbert was elected to his first term on NEA's Executive Committee in 2013. He previously served as president of the Mississippi Association of Educators. He is a member of the Mississippi ASCD and Curriculum Development, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mr. Gilbert earned an education specialist degree and doctorate from Mississippi College, and holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi.

### Eric C. Heins

A 23-year teaching veteran, Mr. Eric C. Heins is a passionate advocate for at-risk students and currently serves as president-elect of the 325,000-member California Teachers Association. He chaired the CTA Quality Education Investment Act Workgroup charged with monitoring the progress of the CTA-sponsored QEIA. This landmark reform law provides nearly \$3

billion for proven intervention reforms for an estimated 500 schools serving at-risk students.

Mr. Heins says it's time to look beyond a single number to determine whether a school is working or a student is learning. He believes a new framework and vision for accountability must do more than simply identify "winners" and "losers." He says if student learning is truly at the center, then any framework should include a variety of indicators to help identify strengths, focus resources, and support, and ensure that every student, regardless of his or her zip code, has access to a quality education.

Mr. Heins is active on many human rights issues. He was a cadre trainer for LGBT leadership training and the "Breaking the Silence" workshops. He chaired the CTA Diversity Committee and served on the CTA Equity and Human Rights Conference Planning Committee.

Mr. Heins holds a bachelor's degree in music from Chapman College in Orange County. He has a master's degree in language and literacy education and a reading specialist credential from the University of California at Berkeley. Born in Amsterdam, he speaks fluent Dutch.

### Ron "Duff" Martin

A middle school teacher with the Eau Claire Area School District in Eau Claire, Wisc., Mr. Ron "Duff" Martin has also mentored students for 20 years in his position as a high school volleyball coach.

Mr. Martin says it is critical for teachers to be involved in efforts to improve measures used to evaluate their skills as well as methods used to determine the performance of students and public schools. He says students deserve the insight of the professionals who teach them when it comes to the development of these measures because educators are entrusted with implementing the framework and making the vision a reality.

Mr. Martin has a strong record of advocating for better accountability systems. He is a member of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Coordinating Council for Educator Effectiveness and the state's Educator Effectiveness Measurement work group where he collaborates with state officials,

school district administrators, and others to bring the teacher's voice to discussions of school improvement and educator evaluation. He is a former NEA board member and is the chair of the NEA American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus. He was a leader in the Wisconsin Education Association Council Student Program, and later in the Eau Claire Association of Educators. Mr. Martin currently serves as vice president of the Wisconsin Education Association Council.

He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire where he also earned his teaching certificate.

## W. Gerard "Jerry" Oleksiak

Elected to a second two-year term as vice president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, W. Gerard "Jerry" Oleksiak spent 32 years in the classroom, most of that time as a special education teacher.

Mr. Oleksiak says he has enjoyed the challenging work of the NEA Accountability Task Force, and he hopes it will be used by members at the state and local level to lead the movement that will do nothing less than shape the future of public education. He says the opportunity to create a system that works for all students is in members' hands.

Mr. Oleksiak has served the Association in numerous capacities, locally and nationally. He currently is PSEA's representative to the Coalition of Labor Engaged for Accountable Revenue, a coalition of public sector unions in Pennsylvania working for a state budget that reflects the priorities of PSEA members and working families throughout the state. Mr. Oleksiak previously served as PSEA treasurer and a member of the PSEA board of directors. He also sits on the board of the Keystone Research Center and is a Fellow of the Educational Leadership and Policy Center.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Mr. Oleksiak graduated from Saint Joseph's University, earning a bachelor's degree in international relations and his teaching certificate in social studies. Mr. Oleksiak holds a master's degree in education, also from Saint Joseph's, and earned his special education certification through LaSalle University.

## Clara Southerland

Certified in elementary education, Ms. Clara Southerland has more than 30 years of experience as an educator in rural and suburban school districts. She currently serves as an Instructional Coach for Tulsa Public Schools, working with teachers to examine student work and teaching practices to facilitate teachers' decisions on curriculum and instruction. She has held numerous Association positions at the local, state, and national level.

Ms. Southerland believes it is time for education to transform from the current model to a system in which all schools and students are equipped to collaborate, create, and leave prepared to continue to evolve and learn. She said the recommendations of the NEA Accountability Task Force will serve as a catalyst for discussion and decision-making for the future of the teaching profession and America's public school system. She believes educators must inform and influence decision makers at local, state, and federal levels of government for the aspirational vision to be successful.

Ms. Southerland is a long-time advocate of high standards and accountability as a way to improve instruction and empower teachers to make curriculum choices based on their knowledge of students and appropriate pedagogy. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and has been honored as a finalist for Tulsa Teacher of the year, Presidential Awardee for Excellence in Teaching Elementary Mathematics, and Oklahoma Elementary Social Studies Teacher of the Year.

She received her Bachelor of Science degree from Cameron University and a Master of Education degree from the University of Oklahoma.

## Janet Stramel

Ms. Stramel, a National Board Certified Teacher, currently serves as Director of Assessment and Accreditation at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Ka. and is a member of the Kansas National Education Association. Ms. Stramel's core expertise includes teaching mathematics methods courses and is especially interested in research focusing

on the attitudes of middle school students toward mathematics. A member the Accreditation Council of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) 2014-2015 Annual Report Committee, Ms. Stramel also has served as a CAEP Site Visitor and a member of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Board of Examiners. She also has worked with the Kansas State Department of Education on policy related to accountability systems for teacher education programs. Ms. Stramel earned her doctorate from Kansas State University in curriculum and instruction; she also holds a master's degree from Kansas State University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma in middle school mathematics.

## Sherry Tucker

A bookkeeper with Birmingham city schools for 22 years, Ms. Sherry Tucker is responsible for maintaining and overseeing all school funds. She is responsible for maintaining and overseeing all school funds. An important part of her job is ensuring that public funds are appropriately spent. Ms. Tucker also serves as technology coordinator, a position which allows her to help integrate technology in the classroom to improve student achievement.

A member of the Alabama Education Association, Ms. Tucker has held numerous local, state, and national leadership positions, including local president and education support professionals (ESP) vice president. She currently serves as vice president of AEA and she is serving a second term on the NEA Board of Directors.

Ms. Tucker received her undergraduate degree in business administration from Faulkner University. She holds a master's degree in business education from Grand Canyon University and a graduate certificate in advanced conflict resolution practice from Nova Southeastern University.

## Kathy Vetter

An educator for more than 30 years, Ms. Kathy Vetter spent the majority of her career in special education. She also has coached numerous winning Academic

Decathlon teams, speech and debate teams, Special Olympics teams, and cheerleaders.

Ms. Vetter says it is important to develop an accountability system that is fair and transparent. She says it should look at the whole system of improvement that focuses on building high-quality educational systems and not solely on individual teacher evaluations. It also needs to include a system of supports to help educators improve their practice. She believes that if it is done correctly, with continuous improvement, it will help improve both teaching and learning throughout our nation.

She was elected president of the Wyoming Education Association in 2012, and previously as an NEA Director and member of NEA's Budget Committee.

She received degrees in elementary education and special education from Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minn., and she holds a master's degree in early childhood special education from the University of Northern Colorado. Ms. Vetter has a middle school endorsement from Bemidji State University in Minnesota.

## José L. Vilson

A math educator for a middle school in the Inwood/Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City, Mr. José L. Vilson is a writer, activist, and web designer. His first solo project, *This Is Not A Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and the Future of Education*, was published by Haymarket Books in the Spring 2014. American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, NYU professor Diane Ravitch, and Philadelphia Principal and White House Champion of Change Chris Lehmann endorsed the project.

Mr. Vilson says he hopes the NEA Accountability Task Force leaves a legacy for present and future generations of students, teachers, other educators, and the country. He says teachers focused on meaningful reform, including issues of social equity, built the Task Force from the ground level, hoping fellow members can join in envisioning a better present and future.

Mr. Vilson was inducted into the Math for America Master Fellowship, cohort 2014. He currently

serves on the Board of Directors for the Center for Teaching Quality. He writes regularly for *EduTopia* and *TransformED / Future of Teaching*. He also has contributed to *The New York Times*, *CNN.com*, *Education Week*, *Huffington Post*, and *El Diario / La Prensa NY*. Mr. Vilson is a member of NYSUT, a federation of more than 1,200 local unions.

Mr. Vilson received his undergraduate degree in computer science from Syracuse University. He has a master's degree in mathematics education from the City College of New York.

## David Wilkinson

A high school language arts teacher with 14 years of experience, Mr. David Wilkinson is a recognized local, state, and national Association leader. He was a member of Oregon's Race to the Top Design Committee and ESEA Waiver Committee.

Mr. Wilkinson hopes to see the nation move away from its overuse of standardized tests and grow toward a more balanced system of assessments that provide meaningful feedback to students and restore the sanctity of the classroom.

Mr. Wilkinson is the former President of the Beaverton Education Association where he worked on a variety of curriculum and assessment issues including the use of assessments, curriculum adoption, and evaluation tools. He has testified on many occasions before the state legislature on accountability and instructional issues.

## Bob Williams

A mathematics teacher at Colony High School in Palmer, Alaska, Mr. Williams began his teaching career as a Peace Corps teacher in Gambia, Africa. He is a National Board Certified teacher.

Mr. Williams says the NEA Accountability Task Force is important because education policy that authentically includes teacher voices will build capacity and trust in the public education system in ways that improve the quality of education for all students.

Mr. Williams was named Alaska's 2009 Teacher of the Year and he was the recipient of the 2009 Presidential

Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching. He previously served as president of the Alaska Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Currently, Mr. Williams is a member of the Leading the Profession team for NEA-Alaska and NEA. He also is a member of the board of directors for the National Network of State Teachers of the Year.

Mr. Williams received his bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and a master's degree in mathematics education from Columbia University. He holds a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and he currently is pursuing a doctorate in public policy and administration.

## Earl Wiman

A member of the NEA Executive Committee, Earl Wiman has deep roots in public education having worked in Tennessee public schools for 35 years, serving as a kindergarten teacher, principal, and librarian. He created and implemented the Teacher Leadership Institute for the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, a career highlight. The Institute provides highly collaborative teachers an opportunity to develop the leadership skills necessary to serve in non-traditional schools and school district leadership positions.

Mr. Wiman believes the Association's framework and vision must ensure the educator voice is heard and honored in order to determine what a successful public school system looks like and how that success will be measured. He says there should be a shared vision of responsibility that holds all stakeholders accountable for the success of students and collective awareness that students who need help the most receive the support and services they need to be successful. Mr. Wiman says the vision must be equitable for all students, one that establishes high standards for students and educators, along with the needed support.

Elected to a second three-year term on NEA's Executive Committee July 2014, Mr. Wiman is the Executive Committee liaison to three Board

committees: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; Legislative; and Professional Standards and Practices.

Mr. Wiman earned his bachelor's degree from Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and a master's degree in education from the University of Memphis. He holds a doctorate in education from Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, Tenn.

## Becky Pringle

Becky Pringle is vice president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest labor union and professional association for educators. A middle school science teacher with 31 years of classroom experience, Pringle has distinguished herself as a thoughtful, passionate advocate for educators and students, focusing on issues of educator empowerment and student success, diversity, and developing future leaders.

Pringle most recently served as NEA Secretary-Treasurer. A strategic thinker and leader, she was integral to the success of NEA's work to transform the education professions and improve student learning. Most notably, she led the workgroup that produced the Association's groundbreaking Policy Statement on Teacher Evaluation and Accountability—NEA's first broad endorsement of the need for a student-centered, educator-led evaluation and shared accountability system.

Pringle has a long and notable record of Association advocacy at the national, state, and local levels. She began her leadership journey as a local president, and then went on to serve on the Board of Directors for NEA and the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA). She also served two terms as a member of NEA's Executive Committee where she distinguished herself as a thoughtful and passionate advocate for the nation's public school educators and students.

Pringle has been recognized by education and social justice organizations for her commitment to educational equity. She is a recipient of the Black Women's Roundtable Education Innovation & Social Justice Leadership Award from the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, Woman of Power Award from the National Action Network and was named Community Woman of the Year by the American Association of University Women. The impact of her leadership is far-reaching, and includes serving as finance chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; on the Blue Ribbon Panel on Teacher Preparation for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; and on the Institute for Educational Leadership Task Force.

Pringle received her bachelor of science degree in elementary education from the University of Pittsburgh and a master's degree in education from Pennsylvania State University.

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