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Learning First Alliance Challenges Governors to Expand Collaboration with Educators
Report calls for unique collaboration between governors and practitioners in K-12 policymaking

Alexandria, Va. – October 26, 2016 – Governors and state education officials can provide direction to empower local leaders by supporting a collaborative decision making system that brings a new relationship between policy and practice, according to A New Philosophy on Education Decision-Making, a report released today by the Learning First Alliance (LFA).

LFA, a coalition of 13 national education groups that collectively represent more than 10 million educators and parents, offered a series of recommendations on how policymakers and educators can approach school improvement efforts in a way that moves beyond the polarization that too often has characterized recent efforts.

In light of a frequently changing set of policies and initiatives that can follow each election, the report discusses how educational professionals too often are denied the opportunity to fully develop and implement promising programs and major initiatives, such as college and career ready academic standards.

“This letter and report can provide the basis for an enhanced, innovative approach to decision-making that transforms how federal and state policy can link to local leadership at all levels,” said Richard Long, executive director of Learning First Alliance. “By encouraging sustained engagement from all stakeholders, those with the expertise needed to transform teaching and learning can have the opportunity to take the promise of policy and deliver results.”

LFA expresses the hope that governors will use their State of the State addresses this January to emphasize how shared leadership and sustained stakeholder engagement can help drive school improvement efforts.

In particular, the report offers a set of principles from LFA’s member organizations on how states can use Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to promote this level of collaborative decision-making.

The report also highlights recommendations from a focus group last spring—comprised of school board members, teacher leaders, principals, school counselors, parents, and other
education stakeholders—that discussed the tools needed to effectively implement the state education standards. LFA and its member organizations honed in on insights around how to enhance professional development, differentiate instruction for all students, redesign accountability systems, and communicate the changes from the standards to the greater public.

The report also extends beyond a focus on effective implementation of the standards, advocating for local leaders to embrace the broader changes supported by the education community, which include: tighter linkages between teacher preparation programs and in-school professional development, support for specialized educators and increased quality of communications programs.

Through the initiatives and policies outlined in this report, governors can begin to propose collaborative, local leadership across their schools. They can use these recommendations to expand on ESSA’s stakeholder engagement process—and use this new method of decision-making to provide educators with the time, continuity, and supports to effectively implement the standards.

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**About the Learning First Alliance**

The Learning First Alliance is a partnership of leading education organizations with more than 10 million members dedicated to improving student learning in America's public schools. Alliance members include: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; AASA: The School Superintendents Association; American Federation of Teachers; American School Counselor Association; Consortium for School Networking; International Society for Technology in Education; Learning Forward; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Education Association; National PTA; National School Boards Association and National School Public Relations Association.

To learn more about LFA, visit [www.learningfirst.org](http://www.learningfirst.org).