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Learning First Alliance Brings Together Educators to Plan Future of High Standards

Alexandria, Va. (Sept. 22, 2016) – Educators from across the country recently joined the Learning First Alliance (LFA) for a first-of-a-kind work session to discuss implementation of college- and career-ready standards, including Common Core, in their states.

The overriding message from these educators is, “Give us the tools and the space to make college- and career-ready standards work.”

LFA is now releasing “Where We Are and Where We’re Going,” a report that calls for state and local governments to continue moving forward with Common Core and other college- and career-ready standards and support these efforts with better communication, more focus on students’ individual needs, and realistic expectations and timeframes.

The think tank of practitioners included teachers, parents, principals, superintendents, school board members and specialized educators nominated by the 14 national associations that are members of LFA. Through a series of virtual meetings and the in-person work group that met over a five-week period, these individuals discussed both the challenges of implementing such standards and the successes that are unfolding in schools and districts across the country.

“This group of practitioners has high expectations for the future of college- and career-ready standards, provided they are supported and kept away from the political fray,” said Richard M. Long, executive director of LFA. “These educators want to continue the work they’ve started and want their states and school districts to stay the course so that they, and their students, can succeed.”

The report’s main recommendations include:

• Continue to move forward with Common Core and similar college- and career-ready efforts on a realistic timeframe to allow students and teachers time to adapt the standards;
• Ensure the new standards are meeting the needs of individual students;
• Expand communications efforts with government officials and show how the standards are improving graduates’ readiness for college and careers;
• Continue to support collaboration between teacher preparation programs and PK-12 programs;
• Expand targeted professional development for all teachers;
• Redesign assessment and accountability systems to ensure these accurately assess knowledge and include multiple measures. Standardized tests should only be a portion of these systems.

The report includes message and direct quotes from the participants (who were given anonymity so that they could discuss local challenges more openly). Overall, many felt that the issue with Common Core
and other standards was that it was put in place too quickly, and teachers and other educators did not have the resources needed to ensure successful implementation.

The report, which was funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is available at: http://www.learningfirst.org/whereweareandwhereweregoing.

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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; National School Public Relations Association; and Phi Delta Kappa International. To learn more about LFA, visit www.learningfirst.org.