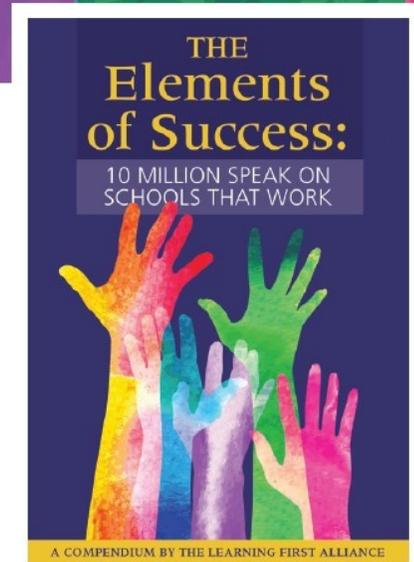


# Strong, Supported Teaching Force and Staff



**W**hat do successful schools look like? There is no one answer. Each successful school reflects the beliefs and character of its community, and each addresses the needs of its students in its own way. However, in *The Elements of Successful Schools: 10 Million Speak on Schools That Work*, the Learning First Alliance identifies six elements common to all successful schools. Members of the Alliance, who represent more than 10 million educators, parents and local policymakers, agree these are the factors needed for a school to perform at a high level and help all students succeed, while understanding these elements don't look the same in each school. How they are achieved and integrated depends greatly on context.

One of these elements is a strong, supported teaching force and staff.

What does that mean? Successful schools are staffed with educators – including teachers, principals, school counselors, technology specialists and others – who are well-educated, well-prepared and well-supported. Educators in these schools benefit from continuous learning and support along the professional continuum, including:

- **High standards for teaching:** Successful schools recognize the importance of high performance standards and work to ensure their staff meet them, investing the resources – including time, money and more – that it takes to develop a strong teaching force. These standards include the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) National Board Standards, the National Education Association (NEA) Principles of Professional Practice and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Educators.
  - **Pre-service education:** Successful schools recognize the importance of educator preparation grounded in clinical practice, opening their doors to teacher candidates for such experiences and for mentoring by teacher leaders. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Clinical Practice Commission has defined essential proclamations and tenets for clinical preparation that is both effective and responsive to local contexts.
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- **Continued professional learning:** Successful schools offer comprehensive teacher induction programs to new teachers, tailored to the needs and context of the educator and the school and community they serve. Strong districts also provide such induction programs for principals and other educators. In addition, successful schools offer all teachers and staff high-quality professional learning opportunities, including peer-led experiences where possible. These learning opportunities meet the rigorous Standards for Professional Learning developed by Learning Forward in collaboration with many other education organizations.
  - **Evaluation and accountability:** Successful schools regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teachers, principals and other staff using multiple measures. These evaluations serve as one component of a comprehensive professional growth and development system, providing educators with clear and actionable feedback on their performance. Evaluation systems are designed at the local level, with input from multiple stakeholders. Both NEA and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have developed frameworks identifying the characteristics of successful teacher evaluation systems, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) together developed such a framework for principal evaluations. There are many similarities between these frameworks, and several of the shared characteristics also apply to evaluations for other educators, such as school counselors, although in successful schools each role is evaluated based on the position's responsibilities.

To achieve these indicators, educators, parents and local communities work together to develop programs to meet their specific goals based on their unique strengths. But while implementation strategies vary, the need for a strong, supported teaching force and staff is met in all successful schools.

Of course, just because a school has such a staff doesn't mean that it will thrive; it is a necessary, but not sufficient, factor in success. For example, a school with poor leadership or that lacks family and community engagement will struggle even with strong, supported teachers and staff. True success requires all six elements of successful schools:

- Focus on the Total Child
- Commitment to Equity and Access
- Family and Community Engagement
- Distributed Leadership
- Strong, Supported Teaching Force and Staff
- Relationship-Oriented School Climate

*To learn more and read the full report or executive summary, visit <https://learningfirst.org/elementsofsuccess>.*

## Learning First Alliance Members

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; AASA, The School Superintendents Association; American Federation of Teachers; American School Counselor Association; Consortium for School Networking; 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