Executive Vice President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Named Chair of Learning First Alliance’s Board of Directors

Francine Lawrence brings wealth of leadership experience to LFA as organization continues its work for the advancement of public education

Washington, D.C. – July 8, 2014 – The Learning First Alliance (LFA), a partnership of leading education organizations representing more than 10 million parents, educators and policymakers, has named Francine Lawrence, the executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), as the 2014-15 chair of LFA’s Board of Directors. Committed to strengthening public education and supporting the organization’s 1.5 million member educators, Lawrence has served in her current position at the AFT since 2011.

“Throughout her entire career, Francine Lawrence has been a true champion of – and advocate for – educators and the students they serve,” said Cheryl S. Williams, executive director of the Learning First Alliance. “Now, as the chair of LFA’s Board of Directors, Francine will be instrumental in helping our organization further promote the successes of our nation’s public schools and work toward the continual and long-term improvement of our public education system.”

As AFT Executive Vice-President, Lawrence serves as secretary of the AFT Benefit Trust and executive vice president of the AFT Educational Foundation. She was unanimously elected treasurer of the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees and has represented AFT on the LFA’s Board of Directors since 2011. She currently serves as a member of the United Way
USA board of trustees. Lawrence serves on the Albert Shanker Institute and AFT Innovation Fund governing boards.

Lawrence served on the AFT executive council as a vice president from 2008 until becoming the union’s executive vice president and was a member of the AFT Teachers program and policy council. She served as the PPC chairperson from 2006 to 2008. She also is the AFT’s chief spokesperson for the Global Campaign for Education, a broad-based coalition dedicated to ensuring access to high-quality basic education in developing nations.

From 1997 to 2011, Lawrence was president of the 3,000-member Toledo (Ohio) Federation of Teachers where she led contract negotiations that focused on what matters most: student achievement. The resulting contract provisions addressed how to attract and retain good teachers, defined expectations for teachers’ subject-matter knowledge and skills, and provided for high-quality, teacher-driven professional development. Lawrence also oversaw the implementation of the Toledo Review and Alternative Compensation System (TRACS), a differentiated compensation system to identify and reward accomplished teachers. TRACS promotes teacher quality while improving the academic performance of students, and provides incentives for excellent teachers to accept assignments at schools identified as high-needs. Lawrence co-chaired the union and district’s Intern Board of Review, which oversees Toledo’s peer assistance and review plan; the Toledo plan serves as an example of a school reform that works.

Lawrence was a member of the Ohio Federation of Teachers executive committee (1988-2011), and she served as vice president of the Northwest Ohio AFL-CIO Council (2008-2011). She was an advisory board member of the Northwest Ohio Center for Labor-Management Cooperation from 1993 to 2011. From 2001 to 2011, she served as a union representative and co-chair (2003-2005) of the Ohio 8, a strategic alliance of superintendents and teachers union presidents from the eight largest urban school districts in Ohio; the coalition’s mission is to improve academic performance and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout the state.

Lawrence was an invited participant at the Aspen Institute’s 2007 Summer Workshop, Rethinking Human Capital for K-12 Education, and its 2008 Summer Workshop, Rethinking

Active in her community, Lawrence chaired the United Way of Greater Toledo’s 1990 campaign, and has served on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Lucas County Mental Health Board, and the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commission. Lawrence also served on the board of directors for Imagination Station, Toledo’s science center. She currently serves on the board of advisers of the Lovell Foundation, which funds programs in mental illness, integrative medicine, cultural/spiritual enhancement and philanthropic education.

An experienced educator, Lawrence was a speech-language pathologist in the Toledo Public Schools for many years. She holds a Bachelor of Science in speech and hearing therapy, and a Master of Arts in speech pathology, both from Bowling Green State University.

To learn more about the LFA, visit www.learningfirst.org.

**About The Learning First Alliance**

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