Dear Educator:

The narrative on public education is a challenge that we must meet. Families and communities are struggling to understand key education changes like the move to college- and career-ready standards, and politicians are looking to capitalize on their concerns and calling to blow up the system. The education community is on the defensive, and in some places education professionals are pitted against each other as budget cuts threaten jobs and resources that we all know are important if we want students to thrive. Educators need to speak with one voice, taking back the conversation by spreading the word about the great things happening in schools and sharing their expertise on what’s needed to help each student reach their full potential.

As public schools across the nation open their doors this fall, you have the opportunity to address this challenge. The back-to-school season is exciting not just for students and educators, but for parents, businesses, the media and others. It’s a time when the greater community is primed to pay attention to its schools.

The Learning First Alliance’s 2016 back-to-school communications toolkit, “Working Together for Student Success,” is intended to help you take advantage of that attention to build community awareness in two key areas:

- The great things happening in your public schools, including progress towards graduating all students ready for success in college or career
- The importance of the education community – including and beyond classroom teachers – in each child’s education

Whether you serve as a superintendent, teacher, school board member, school counselor, principal, PTA president, education technology director, or in any other role in the school system, you can customize the tools it contains – including talking points, an infographic, a sample back-to-school news release, a draft opinion-editorial, social media language and more – to reflect the accomplishments and priorities of your community.

We hope you use these resources in your outreach to families, the media, businesses, faith-based and other community leaders and partners, and the others with whom you communicate in the back-to-school season. We also encourage you to share these resources with your colleagues in your school and district. The message is stronger and more powerful when we all speak with one voice.

The toolkit can be found at [www.learningfirst.org/backtoschooltoolkit](http://www.learningfirst.org/backtoschooltoolkit). We grant permission to all educators to use and reproduce the materials and to tailor them to fit individual needs.

Sincerely,

Richard Long
Executive Director, Learning First Alliance