Learning First Alliance Welcomes Two New Board Members

ASCD’s Deborah S. Delisle and PDK’s Dr. Joshua P. Starr bring wealth of education experience to new roles at LFA

Washington, D.C. – July 2, 2015 – The Learning First Alliance (LFA), a partnership of leading education organizations representing more than 10 million parents, educators and policymakers, welcomes Deborah S. Delisle, executive director and chief executive officer of ASCD, and Dr. Joshua P. Starr, chief executive officer of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) International, as its newest board members. Both individuals bring a wealth of education experience to LFA as it continues its leadership and advocacy efforts to improve learning in America’s public schools.

“Both Deborah and Joshua are esteemed leaders in education, bringing extensive expertise to their respective organizations, as well as to LFA as our newest board members,” said Cheryl S. Williams, executive director of the Learning First Alliance. “We look forward to working with them as we continue our ongoing advocacy and work toward the advancement of public education.”

Prior to joining ASCD in July 2015, Delisle served as a teacher, gifted education specialist, curriculum director, elementary school principal, district associate superintendent, superintendent, and most recently as the U.S. Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education. She was nominated to this position by President Obama in January 2012 and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on April 27, 2012. During her tenure, she played a pivotal role in policy and management issues affecting elementary and secondary education for the U.S. Department of Education. Delisle coordinated and recommended policy for programs designed
to assist state and local education agencies in improving the achievement of elementary and secondary school students.

Before her work at the Department of Education, Delisle was a senior fellow at the International Center for Leadership in Education with a deep interest in educator performance systems and creating transformative cultures in schools and districts to support educators and students. Prior to that, she served as Ohio's 35th state superintendent of public instruction from 2008 to 2011.

Prior to joining PDK in June 2015, Dr. Starr most recently was superintendent of the 154,000-student Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in suburban Washington, D.C. Dr. Starr, a father of three who attend public schools in Montgomery County, began his career as a teacher in Brooklyn, NY, working with adolescents with several emotional disabilities. He later served as director of accountability for the New York City public schools and as superintendent of the Stamford, CT, schools. Dr. Starr has a doctorate in education from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, a master’s degree in special education from Brooklyn College, and a bachelor’s degree in English and history from the University of Wisconsin.

During his tenure at Montgomery County, Dr. Starr developed a reputation as a leader who was focused on ensuring that all MCPS students received a high-quality education focused on academic excellence, creative problem solving and social-emotional learning. Under his leadership, MCPS directed more funds to schools that enroll many high-need students, expanded community engagement and partnerships, created a data-driven early warning system to identify students at risk of failing, and revised the district’s discipline policy to reduce out-of-school suspensions. Graduation rates increased across the board during Dr. Starr’s tenure, and he revised school report cards to include comprehensive measures of school improvement, including well-being and employee engagement.

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

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

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