

March 2011

# RESEARCH FINDINGS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES:

## A Guide for Policymakers

2<sup>nd</sup> edition

By the Staff of The  
Wallace Foundation



The Wallace Foundation®

Supporting ideas.

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Expanding opportunities.®

**At The Wallace Foundation**, we invest in organizations willing to test promising new approaches, while commissioning and sharing independent research on what works and does not, so that others can benefit from their experience.

The issues we focus on spring from our commitment to develop effective ways to surround children with learning and enrichment opportunities, both in and out of school. In particular, we aim to:

- Improve the quality of schools, primarily through investments in developing and placing effective principals in high-needs schools;
- Improve the quality of and access to out-of-school time programs, primarily through the creation of coordinated city systems that, among other things, use data and ongoing assessment; and to strengthen the financial management skills of the non-profits that deliver out-of-school time programs to children; and
- Integrate in- and out-of-school learning by: supporting efforts to re-imagine and expand learning time during the traditional school day and year, as well as during the summer months; helping develop ways to expand access to arts learning in and out of school; and using technology in new ways as a teaching tool and to promote creativity and imagination.

**Publications cited in this document can be downloaded for free from Wallace's website at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org).**

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The Wallace Foundation is an independent, national foundation based in New York City.

Dear Readers,

For the past decade, The Wallace Foundation has worked with 24 states, and many more school districts, city governments and community organizations, to improve opportunities for children to learn both in and out of school. Then as now, millions of children are receiving an inadequate education, many in chronically failing schools in distressed neighborhoods. And the problem isn't just schools. Far too many children find themselves alone and languishing after the school day ends and over the summer months, with little available to help them continue to learn and be engaged in productive activities outside of school.

If anything is clear from our work, it is the essential yet often-overlooked role of *leadership* – in turning around failing schools and in ensuring that excellent teaching reaches all children. We now have, for the first time, overwhelming evidence that strong leadership in a school can make a real difference in student achievement – indeed, research concludes that “there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader” and that “the impact of good leadership is greatest in schools where it is most needed.”<sup>1</sup> Investing in good leadership is also a particularly cost-effective improvement strategy: who better than a highly-skilled, well-prepared principal to influence the teaching that goes on throughout an entire school? Similarly, we know that committed leadership from mayors and others in the public and private sectors is no less crucial for cities working to make high-quality, out-of-school time learning available to more children.

In this brief guide, first published in 2009 and now updated with new research, we discuss what we have learned about how to improve the learning opportunities we provide for our children, in and out of school. Specifically, the resources highlighted in this document offer policymakers practical guidance on: what an effective school leader actually does; how the training of school leaders can be improved so that they can meet the tough demands of their jobs; and what districts need to change to better support and evaluate principals so that effective leadership practices are recognized and reinforced, and instructional improvement becomes everyone's top priority. It also discusses what public and private leaders throughout entire cities need to do to ensure that the afterschool hours and summer months are times of enrichment and growth for all children, rather than boredom and risk.

Our nation faces serious challenges that require its leaders to make the best possible uses of public funds, based on the best available knowledge, to meet both the short and long term needs of the country. We offer this guide as a source of such knowledge, and we invite you to visit our website at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org) where the publications cited throughout this document can be downloaded for free, along with many others.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Christine DeVita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

M. Christine DeVita  
President, The Wallace Foundation

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Leithwood, et al., *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, Universities of Minnesota and Toronto, 2004, 3

## TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-PERFORMING SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

*“Great principals attract great talent. They nurture that great talent and they develop that great talent. Bad principals are the reverse: bad principals don’t attract good talent, they run off good talent. They don’t find ways to improve those that are trying to get better. They don’t engage the community.”* — U.S. Education Secretary Arne L. Duncan, addressing The Wallace Foundation’s National Conference on Education Leadership, October 2009.

Research confirms that there are no documented instances of failing schools turning around without powerful leadership. While teachers have the most direct and obvious impact on student learning, leadership is second only to teaching in influencing outcomes for all students. For the first time, there is empirical evidence that links what leaders do with student performance.

- **Regardless of the turn-around approach, investing in good principals is a particularly cost-effective way to improve teaching and learning throughout entire schools.**
  - Principals are uniquely positioned to ensure that excellent teaching and learning spreads beyond single classrooms.<sup>2</sup>
  - Effective principals can improve learning in large part by motivating teachers and by creating “professional communities” – in which teachers are no longer acting in isolation but give each other help and guidance to improve instructional practices.<sup>3</sup>
- **A good principal is the single most important determinant of whether a school can attract and keep the high-quality teachers necessary to turn around schools.**
  - As Stanford University education policy analyst Linda Darling-Hammond has stated: “It is the leader who both recruits and retains high-quality staff. Indeed, the number one reason for teachers’ decisions about whether to stay in a school is the quality of administrative support – and it is the leader who must develop this organization.”<sup>4</sup>
- **To turn around schools, principals need to share decisionmaking.**
  - High-performing schools with strong student achievement gains tend to have a high degree of “collective leadership.” New research concludes: “Principals are most effective when they see themselves as working collaboratively towards clear, common goals with district personnel, other principals, and teachers.” Paradoxically, principals willing to share authority do not diminish their own.<sup>5</sup>
  - But the principal still must lead school improvement by: creating structures and incentives around a common agenda for learning among all staff; aligning resources with learning activities, needs and priorities; and building external relations that can support a school-wide learning agenda, including garnering community support, sufficient resources and anticipating resistance or conflict.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Leithwood, et al., 12

<sup>3</sup> Karen Seashore Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, Kyla L. Wahlstrom, Stephen E. Anderson, et al., *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement/University of Minnesota and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, 2010, 42, 50

<sup>4</sup> *Education Leadership: A Bridge to School Reform*, The Wallace Foundation, 2007, text of speech by Linda Darling-Hammond, 17

<sup>5</sup> Seashore Louis, et al., 21, 35, 107

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Knapp, et al., *Leading for Learning: Reflective Tools for School and District Leaders*, Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy, University of Washington, 2003; see also Leithwood, op. cit.; and Bradley S. Portin, Michael Knapp, et al., *Leadership for Learning Improvement in Urban Schools*, Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy, University of Washington, 2009.

## PREPARING AND DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERS

“If our 95,000 schools each had a great principal, this thing would take care of itself.”  
— U.S. Education Secretary Arne L. Duncan, addressing The Wallace Foundation’s National Conference on Education Leadership, October 2009.

Experts have raised serious concerns about the quality and relevance of the leadership preparation provided by many university-based programs – which are where most of our principals are trained – and about the speed and effectiveness of state actions to address those shortcomings.<sup>7</sup> To attract and keep the right leaders, particularly in low-performing schools, states and districts should draw on the following effective but underutilized approaches to preparing them for the job:

- **Provide better, more selective training to prepare transformative leaders whose goal is to significantly improve teaching and learning and to turn around failing schools.**

Proven effective practices in the preparation of future school leaders include:

- Selective recruitment to identify expert teachers with leadership potential;
- A challenging, coherent curriculum that focuses on instructional leadership, the ability to change the culture of schools and improve the skills and effectiveness of teachers;
- Active instruction that integrates theory and practice, problem-based learning, budget exercises, hiring and effective data use; and
- Well-designed and supervised internships that provide real opportunities for aspiring principals to experience leadership first-hand.<sup>8</sup>

Graduates of these more effective preparation programs perform better.

- Graduates of the NYC Leadership Academy, which incorporates the above practices, were placed in extremely low-performing schools and improved their schools’ academic performance at higher rates than other new principals in English-language arts and math.<sup>9</sup>

Redesigning training programs has payoffs for districts and for universities.<sup>10</sup>

- Districts had an increased pool of better prepared principal candidates.
- Universities were able to reform and improve their leadership preparation programs and gained more prestige.

- **Don’t ignore state policies that can affect principal training.**

- States have a number of policy levers to influence the preparation and quality of school leaders, including: improving leader training standards, developing tougher program accreditation and leader licensure requirements, and allocating funding to the most effective programs.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Southern Regional Education Board, *Schools Need Good Leaders Now: State Progress in Creating a Learning-Centered School Leadership System*, 2007, 2

<sup>8</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, et al., *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs*, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, 2007, 6; see also The Wallace Foundation, *Becoming a Leader: Preparing School Principals for Today’s Schools*, 2008

<sup>9</sup> New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy, *The New York City Aspiring Principals Program: A School-Level Evaluation: An Update Through 2008-09*, 2011

<sup>10</sup> Margaret Terry Orr, Cheryl King, Michelle LaPointe, *Districts Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches from Eight Urban Districts*, Education Development Center, Inc., 2010, 12

<sup>11</sup> Orr, et al., 11

- Collaborative efforts by state and local leaders have shown promise in improving training programs in some states. About 200 such programs located in Wallace-funded states have either been forced to redesign their programs to align with new leadership standards and proven training practices or, less frequently, have been shut down for failing to do so.
- **Encourage school districts to better exercise their own “consumer” power to influence the training of the school leaders they will eventually hire.**  
Some districts are using their consumer clout by:
  - Becoming a discerning customer – for example, by developing district-level leadership standards or core competencies and then selecting only graduates of programs whose training is redesigned to meet those standards (Chicago, Fort Wayne, IN and Louisville, KY).<sup>12</sup>
  - Becoming a competitor – by creating their own district-level leadership programs aligned with their standards and priorities (Boston, Springfield, MA, Fort Wayne, Providence, Atlanta and New York City).<sup>13</sup>
  - Becoming a collaborator – by using contracts and other inducements; e.g., conferring “preferred provider” status on universities that agree to take such steps as changing admissions criteria, curricula, internships, etc., to better meet district needs (Louisville, St. Louis, Providence, Chicago and Springfield, IL).<sup>14</sup>
- **Provide more and better mentoring for new principals once they’re hired.**
  - More than half the nation’s states and many districts have recently introduced mentoring for principals – a sharp reversal of a long-held “sink-or-swim” attitude toward novice school leaders.<sup>15</sup>
  - In the absence of quality criteria, however, mentoring can be just a “buddy system” that fails to propel the progress of new principals as effective leaders of learning.
  - States and districts should ensure that mentoring is focused on student learning. For example, the NYC Leadership Academy guides its mentoring by using a Leadership Performance Planning Worksheet, which identifies key behaviors linked to successful instructional leadership.
  - Missouri now provides mentor training both online and in person.
- **Enhance peer and district support for both novice and veteran principals.**
  - Recognizing that effective instructional leadership requires regular, sustained support for both novice and veteran principals, central office staff in some urban districts are providing individual support to school principals, as well as creating networked groupings where peer principals can support each other.<sup>16</sup>
  - Districts should also avoid one-size-fits-all professional development for its principals and instead tailor it to the differing leadership needs of elementary and secondary schools and to school context (size, student population being served).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Orr, et al., 5

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. (See also The Wallace Foundation, *Report '09: Appraising A Decade*, 12, concerning Atlanta and New York City).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> The Wallace Foundation, *Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons from the Field*, 2007, 3

<sup>16</sup> See Portin, op. cit., and Margaret Plecki, Michael Knapp, et al., *How Leaders Invest Staffing Resources for Learning Improvement*, Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy, University of Washington, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Seashore Louis, et al., 101



## TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-PERFORMING SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF DISTRICTS

*“Districts cannot necessarily make weak leaders succeed, but we have seen too many districts create conditions in which even good principals are likely to fail.”<sup>18</sup>*

Districts have enormous power to support principals in driving instructional improvement in their schools. Yet historically, federal and state policies have barely recognized district central offices as catalysts for school renewal, nor have districts consistently made instructional improvement their top priority.

In order to help school leaders turn around the weakest performing schools, districts can:

- **Refocus central office staff more on supporting principals as instructional leaders and less on administrative management issues.**
  - Learning improvement depends on establishing a persistent, supportive and firm central office presence in the school, focused primarily on learning.
  - Some large urban districts are therefore working to fundamentally change the practices and priorities of central office staff so that they are more focused on the instructional needs of schools and their leaders.
  - Steps such as arranging schools in networks, and designating central office administrators with the sole task of helping each principal succeed as an instructional leader, have increased responsiveness to particular school needs.<sup>19</sup>
  
- **Direct more resources to high-needs, hard-to-staff schools and give principals more authority and flexibility to meet district goals.**

To accomplish this, districts should:

  - Invest most heavily in struggling schools where concerns about staff knowledge, skills or commitment are greatest;
  - Provide principals with more authority over staffing decisions in their schools.<sup>20</sup>
  - Empower both district leaders and principals to change staff assignments in schools and classrooms in order to maximize the match between the learning needs of students and the skills of teachers;
  - Increase allocation of instructional time through schedule changes or additions to the normal school day for underserved or underperforming students.<sup>21</sup>
  - Enable principals to devote more time to improving instruction.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Southern Regional Education Board, *The Three Essentials: Improving Schools Requires District Vision, District and State Support, and Principal Leadership*, 2010, i

<sup>19</sup> See Meredith I. Honig, Michael A. Copland, et al., *Central Office Transformation for District-wide Teaching and Learning Improvement*, Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy, University of Washington, 2009. Also, Plecki, et al., op. cit.; and Southern Regional Education Board, *The Three Essentials: Improving Schools Requires District Vision, District and State Support, and Principal Leadership*, 2010, 11-44.

<sup>20</sup> Seashore Louis, et al., 164

<sup>21</sup> Plecki, et al.

<sup>22</sup> One new approach being tested in more than 325 schools in 10 states is to add a school position called the SAM, or School Administration Manager, to relieve principals of many non-instructional tasks. For early results from that project, see Brenda J. Turnbull, et al., *Evaluation of the School Administration Manager Project*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2009; and a follow-up report, *Achievement Trends in Schools with School Administration Managers (SAMs)*, 2010.

- **Create incentives and conditions to enable schools with the most needs to attract high-quality principals and teachers.**
  - The inability of many disadvantaged districts and schools to attract highly qualified leadership candidates is not, at its heart, a candidate shortage problem.
  - It is, rather, a problem rooted in poor working conditions and incentives: high-needs districts have difficulty recruiting principals primarily because few well-qualified candidates are willing to accept the pay and working conditions that compare poorly to other districts.<sup>23</sup>
- **Reduce principal turnover.**
  - Research finds rapid turnover of principals in schools: a new one every three or four years on average. This changeover in leadership has a distinctly damaging effect on school culture and a measurable negative impact on student achievement.<sup>24</sup>
  - Districts need to examine whether their policies and practices – such as required principal rotation among schools – are contributing to high turnover.
- **Provide timely, relevant data – and training in its use – to enable principals to accurately diagnose and address learning needs.**
  - Very few principals are adept at gathering or using evidence about what would need to change in their schools to improve instruction.<sup>25</sup>
  - Districts need to provide principals real-time, useful data – and train them in effective data use – to perform key diagnostic functions: identifying weaknesses in teaching or learning; crafting appropriate strategies to address them; and making decisions about resource allocations.
  - Districts including Atlanta, New York City, Portland and Eugene, OR are investing in new data systems, in data literacy for school staff, and in generating new forms of data (for example, regular surveys of principals concerning the relevance of the district’s professional development).<sup>26</sup>
- **Use principal assessments to focus more attention on improving instruction.**
  - Performance assessments typically used in urban districts reveal little about a leader’s impact on instruction.<sup>27</sup>
  - Too often, assessment is seen as a single high-stakes event – a form to be completed or an interview conducted – rather than as part of an ongoing professional development process. And few districts use assessment to gather data to track how well principals are doing and pinpoint shortcomings that could be remedied.<sup>28</sup>
  - For the first time, a rigorous principal assessment system, VAL-ED, identifies and assesses key leadership behaviors<sup>29</sup> most associated with improving instruction – and the ability to share authority. And it provides data to help districts tailor professional development to address school leaders’ weaknesses.

<sup>23</sup> The Wallace Foundation, *Beyond the Pipeline: Getting the Principals We Need, Where They are Needed Most*, 2003, 5

<sup>24</sup> Seashore Louis, et al., 166

<sup>25</sup> Seashore Louis, et al., 179

<sup>26</sup> Plecki, et al., 51-59

<sup>27</sup> See Andrew Porter, Joseph Murphy, et al., *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education: Technical Manual 1.0*, 2008; also, The Wallace Foundation, *Assessing the Effectiveness of School Leaders: New Directions and New Processes*, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> *Assessing the Effectiveness of School Leaders: New Directions and New Processes*, The Wallace Foundation, 2009, 4

<sup>29</sup> See Andrew Porter, Ellen Goldring, Joseph Murphy, et al., *A Framework for the Assessment of Learning-Centered Leadership*, Vanderbilt University, 2006. The report identifies six core topics that principals need to address school improvement: high standards for student performance; rigorous curriculum; quality instruction; culture of learning and professional behavior; connections to external communities; and systemic performance accountability. In pursuing each of those, the research also identified six key leadership behaviors that principals need to exhibit and be assessed on: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating and monitoring.



## EXPANDING LEARNING TIME

*“...high-quality, well-managed and structured (out-of-school time) opportunities can help youth develop critical academic, social and emotional attributes and skills, especially if offered consistently and persistently over time.”<sup>30</sup>*

Schools and their leaders and teachers can't do the whole job alone. Research finds that expanding learning time after school and during summers can be “an effective way to support student learning,” particularly for students most at risk of failure and most susceptible to summer learning loss.<sup>31</sup>

- **Cities and school districts can work together to extend and reinforce learning beyond the school day and year by:**
  - Securing the commitment of top city and school leaders to improve the quality of after-school and summer opportunities;
  - Mobilizing and effectively coordinating other enrichment resources in communities, including libraries, arts and cultural institutions and parks;
  - Promoting coordination between and among school systems and youth-serving organizations to increase access and participation in learning and enrichment opportunities outside the school day; and
  - Investing in citywide data systems to monitor attendance and program quality and better inform cities' planning, budgeting and decisionmaking.<sup>32</sup>
  
- **Identify underserved neighborhoods and conduct market research to learn parents' and children's needs and preferences in planning after-school program offerings.**
  - New York City used neighborhood-by-neighborhood mapping to correlate the distribution of city-funded after-school programs with population data on high-needs children.<sup>33</sup> As a result, the city identified more than 500 schools in underserved neighborhoods and opened them up, free of charge, to new city-funded after-school programs.
  - National surveys have found stark differences in how poor and better-off families perceive the availability of programs, as well as what they want from them. Poor families are far more dissatisfied with the availability and quality of programs and much likelier than more well-off families to want academically oriented after-school and summer programs for their children.<sup>34</sup>
  - A number of cities have conducted their own market research to identify what parents and children want in out-of-school learning. Such research in Washington, D.C., for example, revealed strong demand for arts and cultural programs and homework help, but also widespread anxiety about safety.

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<sup>30</sup> Susan J. Bodilly, et al., *Hours of Opportunity, Volume 1: Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer School, and Other Out-of-School-Time Programs*, RAND Education, 2010, 1

<sup>31</sup> Erika A. Patall, Harris Cooper, Ashley Batts Allen, “Extending the School Day or School Year: A Systemic Review of Research (1985-2009),” *Review of Educational Research*, 2010, Vol. 80, No. 3, 401, 426

<sup>32</sup> Bodilly, et al., 14-15. Also see *Revitalizing Arts Education through Community-Wide Coordination*, RAND, 2008; *Increasing Arts Demand through Better Arts Learning*, The Wallace Foundation, 2009; *A Place to Grow and Learn*, The Wallace Foundation, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Susan J. Bodilly, et al., *Hours of Opportunity, Volume 3: Profiles of Five Cities Improving After-School Programs through a Systems Approach*, RAND Education, 2010, 30

<sup>34</sup> Public Agenda, *All Work and No Play? Listening to What Kids and Parents Really Want from Out-of-School Time*, 2004, 11-12

- **Match scarce resources to results and target funding toward high-quality services that combine strong attendance, program effectiveness and good management.**
  - To support high-quality after-school programming, a number of big cities – New York City, Chicago, Denver, Louisville, San Francisco, Boston, Providence and Washington, D.C., for example – have created Management Information Systems that can, for the first time, provide both citywide and program attendance data.<sup>35</sup> This helps ensure that public funds are supporting the programs that are doing the best job in serving kids – who vote with their feet if the programs are not good.
- **Improve access to and participation in high-quality programs among the hardest-to-reach children, especially teens.**
  - Despite well-documented benefits of after-school programs for older youth, participation wanes with age. A number of cities are working to improve program access and lift participation among this hard-to-reach group.
  - Effective steps to boost youth participation include: providing youth with leadership opportunities within programs; developing closer ties between schools and after-school programs so that schools help get the word out to students about quality programs they might want to attend; and collecting data to identify where underserved youth live and locate programs in their neighborhoods for them to attend.<sup>36</sup>
  - AfterSchool Matters in Chicago, a nationally renowned program, has achieved exceptionally high rates of participation by offering teens high-quality paid apprenticeships after school.<sup>37</sup>
- **Improve summer learning programs and expand opportunities to fill unmet demand and prevent summer learning loss.**
  - A large-scale national survey indicates that demand among U.S. families for programs outpaces supply: only about a quarter of American schoolchildren currently participate in summer learning programs. However, the parents of more than half of all nonparticipating children – an estimated 24 million – say they would likely enroll them, given the opportunity. And unmet demand is greatest among low-income and minority families.<sup>38</sup>
  - Summer learning loss is well documented, along with its consequences in worsening the achievement gap. The problem tends to be more severe among lower-income families for whom engaging non-school activities are less available.<sup>39</sup>
  - Research has identified a handful of programs that have reduced summer learning loss in reading achievement or math.<sup>40</sup> But those programs have not yet been successfully brought to scale.

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed examination of how these eight cities have been developing, operating and using management information systems to improve and evaluate out-of-school learning programs and make funding decisions, see Bodilly, et al., *Hours of Opportunity, Volume 2: The Power of Data to Improve After-School Programs Citywide*, RAND Education, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> See Sarah N. Deschenes, Amy Arbreton, et al., *Engaging Older Youth: Program and City-Level Strategies to Support Sustained Participation in Out-of-School Time*, Harvard Family Research Project, Public/Private Ventures, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> *Report '08: A Performance Assessment*, The Wallace Foundation, 16

<sup>38</sup> See *America After 3PM: Special Report on Summer: Missed Opportunities, Unmet Demand*, After School Alliance, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Ron Fairchild, et al., *It's Time for Summer: An Analysis of Recent Policy and Funding Opportunities*, National Summer Learning Association, Johns Hopkins University, June 2009, 3

<sup>40</sup> Mary Terzian, et al., *Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically-Disadvantaged Children and Youth: A White Paper for The Wallace Foundation*, Child Trends, 23. The successful programs cited in this research included: Louisiana Summer Youth Opportunities Unlimited; Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL); and Read to Achieve. The Louisiana program and BELL reduced summer learning loss in both reading and math.

## SUPPORTIVE STATE, CITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

*“Close collaboration and coordination between states and districts has not been the historic norm. It is complex, time-consuming and challenging to maintain. And it takes the sustained backing of top government and education leaders with the authority to make change happen.”*<sup>41</sup>

- **Collaboration between states and school districts promotes more supportive conditions for school leaders.**
  - Where policies are closely aligned, school principals report greater authority over hiring teachers, determining school schedules, and defining student achievement goals. They are also able to devote more time on average to improving instruction.<sup>42</sup>
  - Principals in less coordinated states report greater frustration over time spent in improving instruction and less authority over evaluating and removing teachers and administrators.<sup>43</sup>

- **Effectively connecting state and district policies, while rare, can be a promising path to statewide school improvement.**

Places making the most progress in creating and sustaining more cohesive education leadership policies had the following in common:

- Strong political support and the engagement of top leaders (state, city, district);
- Comparatively little staff turnover at key policy positions;
- Common state-level policies, such as academic standards and graduation requirements;
- Pre-existing social networks and collaboration among governmental and non-governmental organizations; and
- Shared vision and goals among school boards and superintendents – essential if districts are to translate state policies into local practice.<sup>44</sup>

- **Top leadership commitment is also essential in coordinated efforts to expand learning opportunities outside the school day and year.**

- Committed public and private leadership is “the price of admission” for achieving large-scale improvements in out-of-school time learning opportunities.<sup>45</sup>
- Similarly, committed and inclusive leadership has been crucial to recent efforts to expand access to and quality of arts education in New York City, Los Angeles, Alameda County, CA, Boston, Chicago and Dallas.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Leadership for Learning: Making the Connections Among State, District and School Policies and Practices*, The Wallace Foundation, 2006, 6

<sup>42</sup> Catherine H. Augustine, et al., *Improving School Leadership: The Promise of Cohesive Leadership Systems*, RAND Education, 2009, 83-4

<sup>43</sup> Augustine, 85

<sup>44</sup> Augustine, xix

<sup>45</sup> *A Place to Grow and Learn: A Citywide Approach to Building and Sustaining Out-of-School Time Learning Opportunities*, The Wallace Foundation, 2008, 4

<sup>46</sup> Susan J. Bodilly, Catherine H. Augustine, *Revitalizing Arts Education through Community-Wide Coordination*, RAND, 2008, 65

## RESOURCES

To learn more about the topics covered in this guide, here are some of the key new resources that can be downloaded for free from The Wallace Foundation's website at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org):

### IMPROVING LEADERSHIP TO TURN AROUND SCHOOLS:

*Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement/University of Minnesota and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, 2010

*Districts Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches from Eight Urban Districts*, Education Development Center, Inc., 2010

*The Three Essentials: Improving Schools Requires District Vision, District and State Support, and Principal Leadership*, Southern Regional Education Board, 2010

*Central Office Transformation for District-Wide Teaching and Learning Improvement*, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington, 2010

*Learning-Focused Leadership and Leadership Support: Meaning and Practice in Urban Systems*, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington, 2010

*The School Turnaround Field Guide*, FSG Social Impact Advisors, 2010

*Improving School Leadership: The Promise of Cohesive Leadership Systems*, RAND Education, 2009

*Assessing the Effectiveness of School Leaders: New Directions and New Processes*, The Wallace Foundation, 2009

*Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs*, Stanford University, Finance Project, 2007

### EXTENDING LEARNING TIME:

*Hours of Opportunity (Volumes I, II & III)*, RAND Education, 2010

*America After 3PM: Special Report on Summer*, Afterschool Alliance, 2010

*Engaging Older Youth: Program and City-Level Strategies to Support Sustained Participation in Out-of-School Time*, Harvard Family Research Project, Public/Private Ventures, 2010

*Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically-Disadvantaged Children and Youth*, Child Trends, 2010

*Revitalizing Arts Education Through Community-Wide Coordination*, RAND Education, 2008

*A Place to Grow and Learn*, The Wallace Foundation, 2008

Our vision is that children, particularly those living in distressed urban areas, have access to good schools and a variety of enrichment programs in and outside of school that prepare them to be contributing members of their communities. Our mission is to improve learning and enrichment opportunities for children. We do this by supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices.

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