

# ASSET

Achieving Student Success through Effective Teaching (ASSET)

Nashville's plan to attract, cultivate and retain the most talented educators

A Partnership of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

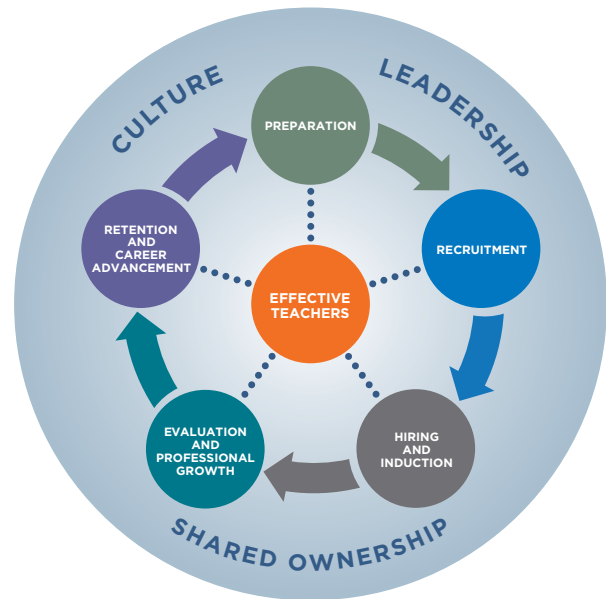
### ASSET: A ROADMAP FOR TEACHER AND STUDENT SUCCESS

As Tennessee's second largest school district, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (Metro Schools) is responsible for ensuring that more than 76,000 students in 140 schools are being prepared every day for college, a career and life. Metro Schools takes this responsibility very seriously and is charting a course to systemically improve the quality of education it provides to all students and make Metro Schools the "first choice for families."<sup>1</sup>

ASSET is the district's strategy to "provide an excellent teacher in every class, for every student, every year."<sup>2</sup> The plan is guided by the understanding that student success is the district's top priority and teachers have the greatest impact on student success in the classroom.

ASSET's recommendations were developed by dozens of Metro School educators who served on various work teams and committees and by experts who collaborated with the work teams.<sup>3</sup> The recommendations in this report are designed to capture what is working in schools throughout the country, while remaining grounded in the everyday realities, experiences and needs of educators and students in the district.

The most important action Metro Schools can take to support effective educators<sup>4</sup> and recruit new talent—leading to an effective teacher in every classroom—is to implement a comprehensive approach to developing and supporting talented educators. For Metro Schools, such an approach begins with targeted strategies to improve how the district develops and supports educators at every stage of their careers—from **preparation, recruitment, hiring, and induction** of new educators through **professional development, retention, and career advancement** of existing educators (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1: A Comprehensive Approach to Achieving and Sustaining Effective Teaching.*

These interactions must be aligned at every stage with each other, with the needs of teachers and students and with the district's vision. Proper alignment creates clear expectations and improves the efficiency of district support for educators. It means that a teacher learns the same skills and strategies in preparation institutions that he/she will need in the classroom and that the district recruits, hires, supports, retains and rewards teachers based on these clearly articulated skills and strategies and measurable standards of effective teaching.

Strategies used to develop and support talented educators must also be linked to efforts to increase **leadership** capacity among central office staff, principals, instructional coaches and teacher leaders; improve the school and district **culture**; and build **shared ownership** of these reforms. Improved leadership, culture and shared ownership will directly improve teacher effectiveness and retention and aid in recruitment. At the same time, the development of a fully aligned approach to nurturing talented educators will improve leadership capacity, culture and collaboration throughout the district.

1 From the Metro Schools vision statement, see <http://www.mnps.org/Page63178.aspx>.

2 Ibid.

3 See [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) for a full explanation of the methodology used in this report and a listing of committee and work team participants.

4 For the purpose of this report, "educators" refers to principals, teachers, counselors and other school staff who interact with and educate students on a daily basis.

## ASSET RECOMMENDATIONS

ASSET's recommendations are intended to help the district create a comprehensive approach to developing effective educators in two phases. The first phase focuses on developing a culture of support and collaboration for educators who are currently teaching and leading in Metro Schools. By focusing on improving the professional learning culture in the schools first, the district will increase its ability to retain its effective educators and lay the groundwork for the second phase, which will focus on improving preparation, recruitment, hiring and induction of teacher candidates and new teachers.

### PHASE 1

► **Recommendation 1:**  
Redefine, evaluate and replicate effective professional development and learning for teachers

Excellent professional development opportunities that lead to communities of constant learning within schools are essential for developing effective educators. The goal of this recommendation is to recognize 20-30 schools that have created effective professional learning environments through instructional coaches, collaborative teaching efforts or other innovative means. ASSET recommends that the district examine the link between highly effective professional learning environments and student success to validate the replication of effective models. In the end, the district will have a group of effective professional learning schools that can serve as models for the rest of the district.

► **Recommendation 2:**  
Create a Career Development Institute with differentiated teacher roles and a leadership track for effective teachers

Many high-performing teachers desire meaningful opportunities to take on leadership roles and advance their careers, while remaining in the classroom. ASSET recommends that Metro Schools implement a Career Development Institute (CDI) to annually identify and recognize the district's most effective new and veteran teachers. These voluntary offerings will expose participants to a curriculum of leadership training, designed to develop the participants' capacity to work effectively with

their peers, manage projects that target their strengths and tackle district- and school-level challenges. Completion of the CDI curriculum will provide teachers with the opportunity to take on various roles and responsibilities and receive additional compensation. This initiative will help retain and attract the best teachers and utilize their talents to help support other teachers within the district.

► **Recommendation 3:**  
Focus on instructional leadership to improve teacher effectiveness

Principals impact every facet of a teacher's career and they establish school culture. Metro Schools is already making significant investments in principal leadership and in utilizing the talents of principals to improve teacher effectiveness. To ensure that current school leaders have the tools they need to be successful, ASSET recommends several next steps. First, Metro Schools should expand its pilot program in instructional rounds to all schools. Second, the district should implement a program to develop the next class of effective principals and leaders. Third, the district should implement a package of mandatory summer and winter Principal Leadership Institutes, based in part on the current professional growth options that the district is offering, for all principals and district staff who support principals. This focus on instructional leadership will create a culture in which principals regard themselves as developers of talented educators who have control over and responsibility for the quality of the teachers in their schools.

### PHASE 2

ASSET recommends implementing the Phase 1 recommendations during the next 12 to 18 months, while the district works with stakeholders to develop specific strategies for Phase 2. Phase 2 will focus on improving preparation, recruitment and induction of talented educators. Additionally, Phase 2 will address how the state's teacher and principal evaluation system, currently under development, will be used to enhance the development of effective educators.

Metro Schools is committed to implementing the ASSET recommendations in these two phases. These recommendations create the foundation for a comprehensive approach to supporting effective educators and will help improve student success throughout the district.