



A Vision for the Future of American Education Overview of *New Day for Learning*

The opportunity to dramatically improve educational outcomes for all young people is here. With resolute political will from the statehouse to the White House, and new funding streams, such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, it is possible for us to dramatically rethink the whole day for students so that learning experiences are seamless and unrestricted by walls, clocks or calendars.

While unacceptably high dropout rates and untold economic losses confront the nation today, we must all play a role in making sure that the future is different for our young people. We need to give students hands-on experiences in their schools and communities, access to technology and exposure to a broader range of possibilities. We need to re-imagine how, when and where young people learn. We need *New Day for Learning*.

New Day for Learning is not a curriculum or one-size-fits-all program; it is a 21st century vision for learning that builds on a foundation of core academics by leveraging community resources to incorporate strategies such as hands-on learning, working in teams and problem-solving. Before-, afterschool and summer programs are a few of the places in and out of the classroom that are already using these learning approaches to engage students and increase their chances for success.

If we want our students to excel academically, explore careers and develop the 21st century skills necessary to thrive in today's global society, we need to start thinking and talking about education differently. Imagine all students everywhere fully engaged in learning. Imagine a new culture of community-wide responsibility for education. It's possible. It's *New Day for Learning*.

What does *New Day for Learning* look like? Whether in an urban, suburban or rural area, *New Day for Learning*:

Expands the definition of student success

Reading, math and science are critical to a solid educational foundation but must be bolstered by applied skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork. Beyond merely teaching students these skills, we must thoughtfully assess them to ensure that today's young people are fully prepared to succeed in school, work and life.

Uses research-based knowledge about how students learn best

Students can't learn if they are not engaged. Educators and community stakeholders must utilize research-based knowledge about how students learn best to effectively frame their programs and instruction.

Fosters collaboration across all sectors

To focus all resources on supporting academic and developmental goals for students, new collaborative structures must be built across sectors in communities and up and down government hierarchies. The vital involvement of community, business, civic and municipal leaders, parents and social service providers is critical to student success and pays economic, civic and social dividends to all stakeholders.

Integrates various learning approaches and places

Engaging strategies that incorporate the arts, technology, service learning and apprenticeships can amplify core academic learning and provide students with opportunities for enriching their education and connecting it with the adult world that they will enter. Schools are just one of the many places in the community where learning and student success can happen.

Provides new opportunities for leadership and professional development

While most current leadership development and certification programs are school-based, the importance of community-building skills is growing. Teachers and youth development staff can forge partnerships that result in heightened professionalism for both — and in better outcomes for students.

Michelle White
202-572-2855
mwhite@newdayforlearning.org
NewDayforLearning.org

