Massachusetts Learning Excursions 2019-2020

Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC), with funding from the Barr Foundation, is excited to announce a set of learning-focused school visits for the 2019–2020 academic year for Massachusetts educators. These Mass Learning Excursions give educators and partners the opportunity to go beyond observing to directly engage in the work of reimagining how education happens. Guided by adult learning facilitators, the excursions give educators the opportunity to learn with and from the game changers who are driving innovation, and to take a pause from their daily lives and become learners themselves.

Every Mass Learning Excursion is designed to develop a growth mindset in educators by creating room to experiment, embrace, and learn from trying out new approaches. Participants are able to observe and engage with students, teachers, and school leaders at each school so they can learn from work that has already been done.

Most of the schools hosting the learning excursions are NGLC grantees; others are schools that have come to our attention as noteworthy pioneers in next gen learning and/or have been recommended by partner organizations. Each of the schools we visit demonstrate a different combination of characteristics of next gen learning: student-centered, personalized, competency-based, equitable, experiential and authentic, technology-enabled, and organized around broader, deeper definitions of student success.

By engaging in a learning excursion, participants avail themselves the opportunity to examine practice, connect with innovators, and explore bold models designed to strengthen student learning outcomes against a broader, deeper definition of student success. While it is true that Massachusetts’ scores on NAEP are at the top of national rankings, this is only one single and fairly narrow metric focused on core content domains. The achievement gap between white and/or affluent students and children of color and/or poverty in Massachusetts is nearly as poor as it has always been. Furthermore, many public schools in the Commonwealth, including those scoring well on state performance report cards, are organized around traditional ideas of pedagogy and definitions of student success that were appropriate for a prior economy and post-secondary work/learn landscape. If there’s one lesson NGLC has learned in our nine years of catalyzing innovation in next gen learning, it’s the truth of the maxim seeing is believing. By seeing the level of transformation and mindset change evident in the learning excursion host sites, participants will be able to consider new ways to address these persistent challenges in Massachusetts. Participants
will deepen their knowledge of next gen learning with an eye toward and strengthening teaching and learning practice in their own context/model design.

At each learning excursion, participants will:
  ● Tour existing well-developed school models demonstrating integrated approaches to next gen learning
  ● Speak with the host school’s students, teachers, and administrators about their model

At select schools, participants will:
  ● Participate in a consultancy facilitated around a problem of practice that the host school has identified

Below you will find brief descriptions of each school.

**Application**
Application is required. Each school team must complete this application form by August 30, 2019. The application form collects basic information about your participants, the name of your organization, and e-mail addresses. The school team must provide a thorough description of the team's composition and a detailed description of your problem of practice and your intended outcomes. Application is open to all public school governance types (traditional, innovation, charter) and team composition may include teachers, school leaders, central office administrators, or others.

**Selection Criteria**
Quality of responses on the application will be taken into consideration.

Preference will be given to Massachusetts-based school teams comprising at least three members (including at least one member of the leadership team). We generally encourage schools to send 3–5 team members per excursion.

This opportunity is aimed at secondary school educators. Teams comprising secondary school educators and those who focus their problem of practice at a secondary school will be given preference.
Each learning excursion will be capped to a certain number of participants based on the space and availability of the host schools. Due to the limited number of spots, we are unable to guarantee your first-choice selection, but we will take your preferences into consideration. Please indicate your preference(s) in the application form.

NGLC staff will work to make equitable selections. We will be in touch by September 13, 2019, to confirm selection and provide registration information. Please wait to make any travel plans until we have confirmed your selection. The registration information we will provide you at that time will include a detailed agenda of the learning excursion and our travel recommendations.

**Stipends**

To defray costs and support school teams to engage in off-site learning, we offer a stipend per team member. Stipends for the Chicago Learning Excursion will be $800 per team member, stipends for the San Diego Learning Excursion will be $1,500 per team member, and stipends for the D.C. Learning Excursion will be $1,000 per team member. In order to receive the stipends, we kindly request the following actions from you:

1) Engage as active members of the learning community by:
   a) Completing all pre-work, such as readings and the learning log.
   b) Attending all segments of the Learning Excursion (start and end times are posted within the table below).
   c) Sharing your thinking and learning visibly during face-to-face and virtual sessions.
2) Tweet about your learning while on-site using the hashtag #NGLChat (strongly encouraged).
3) Complete the participant survey at the end of the learning excursion.
4) Attend the Kick off + Learning Showcase on September 24, 2019 (UPDATE 9/12/2019: this event is cancelled).

Please note that stipends are considered taxable income. These are not reimbursements for travel. Please consult with your tax preparer for questions related to stipends. Stipend checks will be sent by mail after the learning excursion and on completion of the above actions.
Logistics
NGLC will provide lunch during the learning excursions and, for multiple day visits, host one dinner. There will also be a designated headquarters hotel with buses, as needed, to shuttle participants to the school sites.

Teams need to pay for all travel-related expenses (hotel, taxi, airfare, train, any non-hosted meals, etc.) up-front with their own funds. You will need a district credit card or personal credit card to reserve and pay for your hotel room. Please coordinate district payments with the appropriate person at the district office and alert Kerry Norce, knorce@jrglobalevents.com, ahead of time as a credit card authorization for the hotel is required for district-based payments.

On September 24, 2019 at 2:30 p.m. at the Worcester Art Museum, NGLC will host selected participants for the 2019–2020 Mass Learning Excursions along with 2018–2019 participants for a Kick Off + Learning Showcase event. This event will afford 2019–2020 participants with an opportunity to learn from past participants and make connections with the 2019-2020 cohort, while past participants share evidence of their learning and application to practice. We strongly encourage your attendance at this event for the priceless benefits of this kind of educator network-building in Massachusetts. (UPDATE 9/12/2019: this event is cancelled)

On May 14, 2020, NGLC will host a Learning Showcase for 2019–2020 participants. This event will enable teams to share evidence of their own learning and application to practice and to further engage in cross-team connections and networking. This will be the formal wrap-up event for the 2019–2020 Mass Learning Excursion program. Your attendance is required. (UPDATE 3/23/2020: this event is cancelled)

Learning Goals
NGLC will organize and share the agenda, pre-work, and other related information via email. Via the Google doc agenda, you will be able to access all information and materials ahead of time, including your team’s learning log. You are also invited to access learning logs from other teams. This is one way to live out our shared commitment to making our learning visible.
Overview
This year we are pleased to offer learning excursions to the locations and schools listed below. This year’s programming includes visits to Chicago, San Diego, and Washington, D.C. We will visit two schools each day over the course of the 2-3 day experience. Please consider your goals and intended outcomes and your school demographics as you select your preferred Learning Excursion visit(s). Summaries of the school models, including demographics and next gen, personalized learning component(s) are included below to help you align your goals and intended outcomes. (Note: The schools, dates, and itineraries described below are tentative and subject to change. We’ve indicated in the table below confirmed and anticipated host schools. We will update this document in real time when firm commitments from host schools are obtained. We do our best to work with the host schools to keep to firm commitments, but sometimes, circumstances require adjustments. NGLC will update participants immediately of any changes due to adjustments requested by host schools. Thank you for your understanding.)

Please contact Stefanie Blouin at sblouin@educause.edu with any questions. Thanks!

Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts, Worcester Art Museum</td>
<td>September 24, 2019</td>
<td>Kick off + Learning Showcase</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. with dinner following</td>
<td>UPDATE 9/12/2019: this event is cancelled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>October 21-23, 2019</td>
<td>● Intrinsic Schools (7-12, charter)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start: 4:30 p.m. CT, Monday, Oct. 21</td>
<td>● Chicago Tech Academy (9-12, district contract)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>End: 4:30 p.m. CT, Wednesday, Oct. 23</td>
<td>● Disney II Magnet High School, Lawndale Campus (7-12, district)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Robert Lindblom Math &amp; Science Academy High School (7-12, district)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Events</td>
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<td><strong>San Diego</strong></td>
<td>December 3-5, 2019</td>
<td>- High Tech High, Point Loma campus (K-12, charter)</td>
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<td>- Del Lago Academy (9-12, district)</td>
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<td>- Vista Unified School District &amp; Mission Vista High School (9-12, district magnet)</td>
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<td><strong>Washington, D.C.</strong></td>
<td>March 2-4, 2020</td>
<td>- Washington Leadership Academy (9-12, charter)</td>
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<td>- Two Rivers Public Charter School (focusing on 7-8, charter)</td>
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<td>- E.L. Haynes High School (9-12, charter)</td>
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<td>- Columbia Heights Educational Campus (6-12, district)</td>
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<td>Special focus visit for those who work with opportunity youth, capped at 15 visitors</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- The Next Step Public Charter School (ages 16-24, charter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Massachusetts,</td>
<td>May 14, 2020</td>
<td>Learning Showcase for 2019–2020 cohort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worcester Art Museum</td>
<td>2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. with dinner following</td>
<td>UPDATE 3/23/2020: this event is cancelled</td>
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Chicago: October 21-23, 2019

**INTRINSIC SCHOOLS (7-12), Charter**

**Description:** Intrinsic Schools is a network of public charter schools in Chicago that features integrated team-taught blocks in big open spaces. Its flagship Belmont Campus opened in 2013 in a cool converted lumber yard (see [Getting Smart feature](#) on them). Belmont graduated its first class in 2017 and has earned a “CPS Level 1+ School Quality Rating,” which is the highest performance rating, for the past four years. Intrinsic will open its second campus in the heart of downtown Chicago in September 2019. The goal was to build a different kind of school, creating a new educational model for the city and beyond, that flexes time, space, and people to increase student outcomes and improve students’ life trajectories. In order to better prepare students for success in college, career, and life, Intrinsic takes a more comprehensive approach to understanding students’ growth and progress, which includes agency outcomes in addition to academic ones. Personalization and independence is achieved via a holistic, 1:1 application of technology, which empowers team-teaching in flexible, data-driven classrooms—called pods—where 60 students supported by three teachers may be moving from self-directed work to instruction to collaboration and project-based learning. Intrinsic Schools is a [NGLC grantee](#).

**School Demographics:**
- Enrollment: 982
- Race/Ethnicity: 1% Asian, 4% Black, 92% Hispanic, 4% White, 1% Other
- Low Income: 84%
- Limited English: 13%
- Diverse Learners: 19%

**Look For:**
- Reimagined use of space
- Team teaching
- Multiple learning modes

**CHICAGO TECH ACADEMY (9-12), District Contract**

**Description:** Chicago Tech Academy is an educational community whose mission is to educate, empower, and connect a diverse next generation of entrepreneurial thinkers to discover their passions, succeed in college, and
thrive in a digital world. In partnership with High Tech High over three years, ChiTech transformed to a school-wide project-based learning model where academic knowledge is combined with 21st-century skills including critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, communication, and collaboration. Work-based projects and internships help students explore career paths and gain real-world experience. Through the Real World Learning Program, every senior completes an internship, growing to include 11th graders as well. Professional mentors in the tech industry have “power lunches” with students, attend semi-annual school-wide project exhibitions, and support student projects.

School Demographics:
- Enrollment: 253
- Race/Ethnicity: 1% Asian, 79% Black, 17% Hispanic, 2% White, 0.4% Other
- Low Income: 90%
- Limited English: 2%
- Diverse Learners: 27%

Look For:
- School-wide project-based learning
- Mentor relationships between students and industry professionals
- Daily advisory period

**DISNEY II MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL**, Lawndale Campus (7-12), District

**Description:** Disney II provides a rigorous and relevant curriculum in a nurturing and inclusive community. The school focuses on clear articulation and persistent pursuits of high expectations, the integration of arts and technology, the consideration and celebration of diversity, and the growth of a learning community wherein curiosity is kindled and knowledge is sought and valued. The Academic Center and AP Capstone Diploma challenge and engage students. CTE programs in Computer Programming and Web Design support those interested in technology fields to earn certification. The school received a grant from the NGLC Regional Fund in Chicago to redesign its learning model, focusing on personalized and project-based learning. Note: As a magnet school, this school has minimum academic requirements for admission.
**School Demographics:**
- Enrollment: 691
- Race/Ethnicity: 4% Asian, 18% Black, 52% Hispanic, 23% White, 4% Other
- Low Income: 49%
- Limited English: 3%
- Diverse Learners: 13%

**Look For:**
- Arts and technology integration
- AP Capstone Diploma
- CTE programs

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**ROBERT LINDBLOM MATH & SCIENCE ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL** (7-12), District

**Description:** Lindblom, a US News & World Report Gold Medal School, offers high-achieving students unique programs in critical world languages, math, and science. Lindblom has the largest Mandarin language program in Chicago and the largest non-heritage Arabic program in the United States. The Biotechnology Center of Excellence, run in partnership with Baxter International and the Office of STEM Education Partnerships at Northwestern University, provides the anchor for a deep STEM program. Lindblom also provides two forward-looking CTE programs, computer science and pre-engineering, in its effort to integrate career readiness with college readiness. The school received a grant from the NGLC Regional Fund in Chicago to redesign its learning model through personalized learning. (See [this article](#) for more.) Note: This school has academic admission requirements.

**School Demographics:**
- Enrollment: 1,347
- Race/Ethnicity: 1% Asian, 71% Black, 24% Hispanic, 3% White, 1% Other
- Low Income: 64%
- Limited English: 2%
- Diverse Learners: 5%

**Look For:**
- World languages
- Industry partnerships
- Integrated college and career readiness
San Diego: December 3-5, 2019

**HIGH TECH HIGH**, Point Loma Campus (7 Schools, K-12), Charter, San Diego

**Description:** The High Tech High (HTH) network includes 13 schools spanning grades K–12 and a comprehensive adult learning component (teacher certification programs and a Graduate School of Education). HTH’s design principles of personalization, adult world connection, common intellectual mission, and teacher as designer create a platform for a rigorous academic curriculum that includes project-based learning, performance-based assessment, digital portfolios, and internship opportunities.

**Campus Demographics (7 schools):**
- Enrollment: 2,732
- Race/Ethnicity: 46% Latino, 9% Black, 11% Cambodian, Laotian, Asian American, Vietnamese, Pacific Islander, Asian, Japanese, Native American, Filipino
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 47%
- ELL: 8%
- Special Education: 17%

**Look For:**
- Deep project based learning
- Student agency
- Artifacts of student learning

**DEL LAGO ACADEMY** (9-12), District, Escondido

**Description:** Del Lago Academy (DLA) is a public high school of approximately 800 students focused on rich interdisciplinary projects often in the applied sciences. Del Lago Academy was designed around a core academic program that engages scholars in real-world learning in order to prepare them better for success in college and career. To assess what students were doing throughout the scientific process, they created a badging system called **Competency X**. See this example of a tenth-grade badge for Spectrophotometry and this feature write-up from Getting Smart.
School Demographics:

- Enrollment: 791
- Race/Ethnicity: 60% Hispanic, 27% White, 5% Asian, 4% Filipino, 2% Black, 1% Other, 1% Declined/Intentionally Left Blank
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 53%
- ELL: 8%
- Special Education: 8%

Look For:

- Strong focus on culture
- Student agency
- Supporting students’ success through intensive academic support and a range of opportunities based on interest

VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

VUSD’s Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation Plan enables the district to focus on developing personalized learning paths for its students so they are college and career ready.

MISSION VISTA HIGH SCHOOL (9-12), District Magnet, Oceanside

Description: Mission Vista High School (MVHS) started its personalized learning journey a few years ago. The school rewrote its Vision, Mission, and Values statements to match their collective "why" and "what." For the past two years, MVHS has created school-wide personalized learning WIGs (Wildly Important Goals), which include targeted experiences in all courses, projects that create collaboration across departments, and activities that are relevant to the World of Work. MVHS has created three distinct pathway opportunities for students: Discovery, Innovation, and Growth (DIG). MVHS has teachers and courses in various stages in this journey—teachers who have rewritten their entire curriculum so that it is student-centered, project-based, and personalized; teachers who have started competency-based grading systems; teachers who have crafted units in collaboration with other departments; and courses that are allowing students to completely design the projects they are creating, including a brand new capstone course, "My Vision Personalized" for seniors.
Note: As a district magnet, the school requires an application with priority selection (siblings, military, foster/homeless, magnet track, and children of VUSD employees) followed by a lottery.

School Demographics:
- Enrollment: 1,693
- Race/Ethnicity: 49% White, 33% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 2% African American, 7% Other
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 27%
- ELL: 0.8%, 18% Reclassified
- Special Education: 5.5%

Look For:
- Pathway curriculum
- Teacher agency within schoolwide goals
- A strengths-based culture
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS (CHEC) (6-12), District

**Description:** CHEC is a unique globally-themed bilingual campus that serves grades 6-12 and prepares all of its students for success in college and careers. CHEC students come from over 50 countries and they use this diversity to complement their globally-themed curriculum. Every grade explores a global theme, which ties together their learning and builds their global awareness. CHEC has been recognized as one of the top schools in the area and country on the Advanced Placement Challenge Index for offering AP to all students. It also has the only Spanish language dual immersion high school program in Washington, D.C. Students can take a full bilingual program through 12th grade. In 2013, CHEC was selected by Fight for Children as the winner of the Quality School Initiative Award for innovation in education. In 2014, CHEC was selected for a school redesign grant through the NGLC Regional Fund in D.C. to implement blended learning, personalized learning plans, and rethinking the use of time and talent.

**School Demographics:**
- Enrollment: 1,266
- Race/Ethnicity: 5% Asian, 30% Black, 60% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Multiple Races, 1% White

**Look For:**
- An international culture and global awareness
- Dual immersion curriculum

WASHINGTON LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (9-12), Charter

**Description:** Washington Leadership Academy (WLA) is an open-enrollment public charter standalone high school in the heart of Washington, D.C. WLA prepares our kids to thrive in the world and change it for the better. WLA graduates will be college-ready with computer science job skills, know themselves, advocate for themselves and clearly plan their futures, and lead change in their communities and the world. At WLA, you will see students engaging in rigorous college prep academics, a four-year computer science progression, real-world experience including internships, and project-based learning. WLA won an XQ grant and a NGLC Regional Funds grant.
School Demographics:
- Enrollment: 400
- Race/Ethnicity: 1% Asian, 88% Black Non-Hispanic, 9% Hispanic/Latino, 1% Multiracial
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 85%
- ELL: 3%
- Special Education: 20%

Look For:
- Rigorous college prep curriculum
- Four-year computer science pathways
- Real-world experiences including internships

E.L. HAYNES HIGH SCHOOL (9-12), Charter

Description: E.L. Haynes Public Charter School was founded in 2004 and has an award-winning program based on effective practices for advancing student achievement. E.L. Haynes is among the top-performing charter schools in Washington, D.C. and is recognized locally and nationally as a model and for its exceptional student achievement gains. Named for Dr. Euphemia Lofton Haynes, the first African-American woman to receive a doctorate in mathematics and a DCPS teacher, the school emphasizes mathematical reasoning and scientific methods to frame and solve problems as well as the lifelong skills needed to be a successful individual, an active community member, and a responsible citizen. Strategies include engaging and rigorous student-centered instruction, extended day and year-round programs, travel to expand students’ horizons, interests, and passions, and leadership and service-learning opportunities. The school received a redesign grant through the NGLC Regional Fund in D.C.

School Demographics:
- High School Enrollment: 450
- Race/Ethnicity: 49% Hispanic/Latino, 43% African American/Black, 3% White/Non Hispanic, 2% Native American, 2% Multiracial, 2% Asian, 0.5% Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 75%

Look For:
- Advanced Placement programming
- Strong race and equity focus

- ELL: 18%
- Special Education: 22%
THE NEXT STEP PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL (Ages 16-24), Charter

Description: The Next Step Public Charter School serves opportunity youth—students who face extraordinary challenges who are not supported in traditional high schools—providing them an opportunity to continue their education. The school offers bilingual adult basic education (ABE), GED prep, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, in small class sizes. A depth of wraparound supports includes social workers, case managers, attendance and transportation coordinators, college and career counselors, three free meals per day, free childcare, tutoring, and life skills instruction. The oldest public charter school in D.C. (first chartered in 1996), the school is new to its journey of personalization but serves its diverse student body through differentiated instruction, instructional technology, restorative practices, and tutors.

School Demographics:
- Enrollment: 500
- Race/Ethnicity: 92% Hispanic/Latino, 7% African American, 1% Asian
- ELL: 70%
- Students who are parents: 20%

Look For:
- Small family atmosphere where every student is known personally
- Wraparound case management
- Connections to continuing education in community college, vocational education programs, and/or further English proficiency.

Two Rivers Public Charter School (Preschool-8, this trip focuses on grades 7-8), Charter

Description: Two Rivers utilizes hands-on project-based learning in helping all of its students achieve a broader definition of student success beyond just performance on traditional tests. The school has a rigorous focus on social-emotional learning and critical thinking & problem-solving skills in addition to traditional academic learning. The school realizes these outcomes for students through implementation of the EL Education model which includes learning expeditions and daily small group advisories called crews. Through learning expeditions, students spend between 10 and 12 weeks working on in-depth projects that require them to apply their learning in authentic contexts. The crew structure provides a space to explicitly teach the social-emotional learning skills that students
utilize both in and out of school. Two Rivers has worked diligently to strengthen its model by developing authentic and valid methods of assessing deeper learning and 21st-century skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. Two Rivers has received grants through the NGLC Regional Fund in D.C. and the Assessment for Learning Project.

School Demographics:
- Enrollment: 859
- Race/Ethnicity: 59% African American, 24% White, 8% Latinx, 2% Asian
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 31%
- ELL: 3%
- Special Education: 18%

Look For:
- Engaged, diverse, and inclusive learning community and school culture that conveys a commitment to equity and family engagement
- Experiential and project-based learning for students at all skill levels
- Time, encouragement, and resources that support ongoing teacher professional learning