



# **Delivering Whole-System Change for Oklahoma City Public Schools' Learners**

## **Interim Report on OKCPS's First Year with The Learner First, 2015-2016**

**May 15, 2016**

**OKCPS**



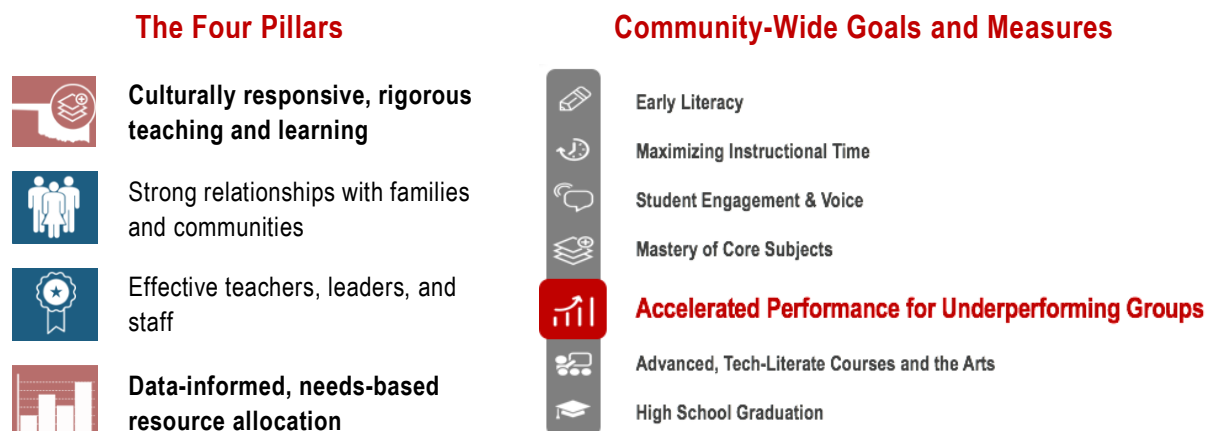
**THE LEARNER FIRST.™**  
ENGAGE | MEASURE | EMPOWER | TRANSFORM

## CONTENTS

Bringing the Great Commitment to Life .....	2
The Work So Far .....	2
Timeline .....	3
Topline Results .....	4
Summary .....	4
Target One: Reading .....	5
Target Two: Math .....	7
Student Attendance .....	9
The Learner First Process .....	10
1. A Whole-System Approach Driven by Change Teams .....	10
2. Five Assumption Shatterers to Help Precipitate Deep Change .....	10
3. Powerful System-Wide Targets to Focus the Effort .....	11
4. Learning From the Focal Students and Their Parents/Families .....	12
5. Making the Important Measurable .....	13
6. Deep Inquiry Tools to Guide Lifts in System Capability .....	14
Why it Works – A Nested Approach .....	15
Example 1: Curriculum Guidance for Personalized Learning .....	16
Example 2: Assessment Aligned to Project-Based Learning .....	16
Example 3: OKCPS's Response to the Office of Civil Rights Complaint: Root cause analysis of behavior and discipline issues .....	18
What is next for OKCPS and The Learner First? .....	20
For more information .....	21
Appendix 1: Authentic Mixed Method Assessment .....	22
Appendix 2: Student Success Rubrics .....	23
Appendix 3: The Learner First Team .....	25

## BRINGING THE GREAT COMMITMENT TO LIFE

Oklahoma City Public Schools' (OKCPS) strategic plan, The Great Commitment, identifies four pillars and seven community-wide goals that reflect the community's hopes and aspirations for its learners.



As part of its work in bringing the Great Commitment to life, OKCPS partnered with The Learner First (TLF). The focus of TLF's work touched on many of the seven goals, but the primary emphasis was on *Goal 5: Accelerated performance for underperforming groups*.

The TLF work focuses primarily via the following two Great Commitment pillars: *Culturally responsive, rigorous teaching and learning* and *Data-informed, needs-based resource allocation*.

## THE WORK SO FAR

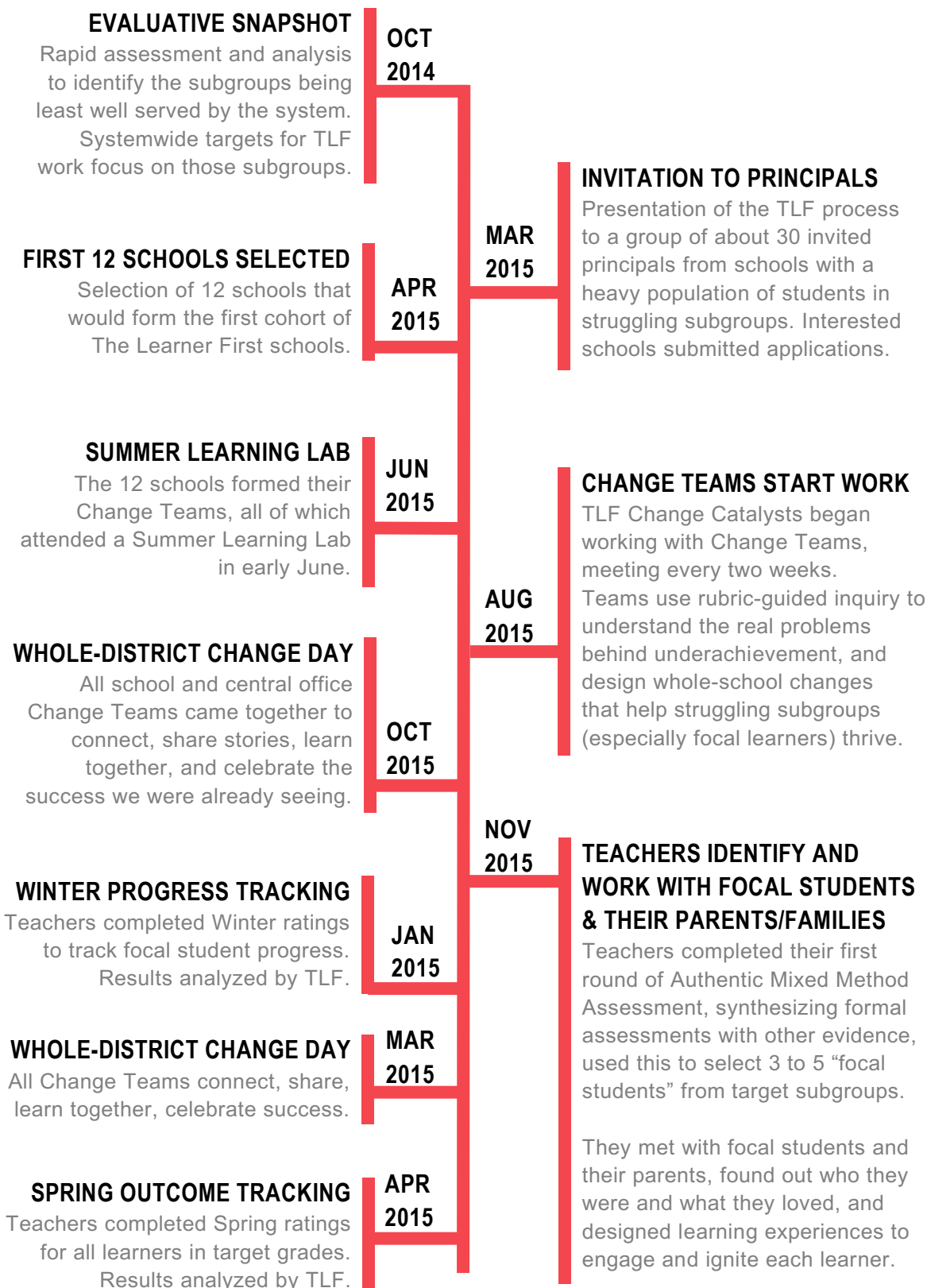
The partnership between OKCPS and TLF began in October, 2014 with an evaluative snapshot of the District, through which OKCPS's most urgent needs were identified.

About 30 OKCPS principals, all from schools with high populations of struggling learners, were then invited to hear a presentation about the TLF process. Interested schools applied to work with TLF, and 12 were selected: John Adams, César Chávez, F.D. Moon, Hayes, Heronville, John Marshall, Martin Luther King, Monroe, Thelma Parks, Rockwood, Southern Hills, and Star Spencer.

After gathering at the 2015 Summer Learning Lab, School Change Teams began meeting every two weeks with TLF Change Catalysts. They engaged in a guided diagnostic inquiry process to identify the factors that were affecting how well their most underserved subgroups were thriving. From there, they designed their own School Change Plans to strengthen areas in need of improvement.

Whole-District Change Days have been held every few months to share the learnings from each school, to deepen understanding of the change process, and to celebrate successes.

## TIMELINE



## TOPLINE RESULTS

### SUMMARY

#### **Target One: 100% of our ELL, IEP, and African American learners in K-2 reading at grade level**

- Target groups: 29% succeeding in Fall → 48% in Spring
- An additional 19% accelerated *toward* the success line
- Of the 1,462 students in target groups, 603 accelerated into or towards the success zone
- All subgroups outside the target also accelerated, most by about 20%
- The numbers of Native American and Alaskan Native students succeeding *more than doubled*: 29% → 63%

#### **Target Two: 100% of our African American and Hispanic learners in Grades 3-12 demonstrating competence and application of grade-level math concepts**

- Target groups: 29% succeeding in Fall → 41% in Spring
- An additional 19% accelerated *toward* the success line
- Of the 2,076 students in target groups, 727 accelerated into or towards the success zone
- All subgroups outside the target also accelerated, by 15% to 25%

#### **Student attendance**

- The Learner First schools dramatically increased the % of students attending regularly (fewer than 5 absences per semester), from 64% → 87% (+ 23%)
- Non-TLF schools, in comparison, showed a very small increase, 61% → 65% (+ 4%)

Note: Data collected to this point reflects only the first two targets, for which ratings were submitted in Fall and Spring of the 2015/2016 academic year. Results for Target 3 will be available in late June.

## TARGET ONE: READING

Over the 2015/2016 academic year, the 12 TLF schools **nearly doubled** the percentage of ELL, IEP, and African American K-2 learners who were reading at grade level – **from 29% to 48%**: (see Figure 1).

### ELL, IEP, & African American Students in Grades K-2 reading at grade level

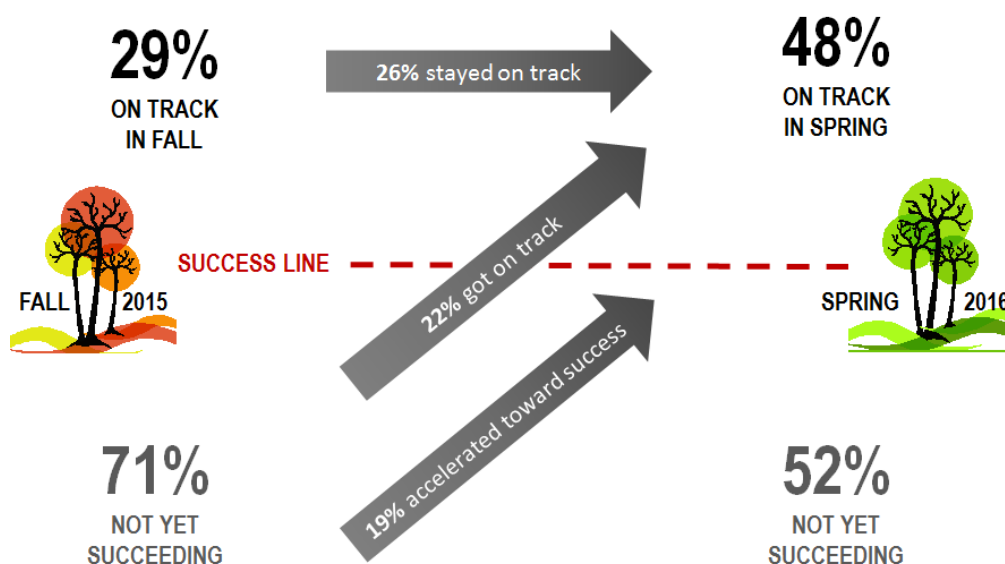


Figure 1. Percentage of K-2 learners in the target demographics who were rated Well On Track or Geared for Success in Reading at Grade Level. [Matched data only; exact same students tracked all year.]

### What does this mean in terms of student numbers?

Out of the 1,462 English Language Learners, learners with special education needs (on IEPs), and African American learners who were tracked at both time points on reading at grade level:

- 372 students stayed on track all year
- Another 325 students got on track during the year
- 278 students accelerated toward success (more than a year's progress in one year)
- 378 students made standard academic progress over the year but are not yet succeeding
- 56 students slipped further behind and are still not experiencing success

Each participating school has received a graph of their own overall results for focal students and for all students in target grades. This allows school change teams to reflect on their overall results, identify still-struggling subgroups, and decide what changes need to be made going forward.



Each participating teacher has received an easy-to-understand spreadsheet that shows the Fall, Winter, and Spring ratings for each of their students (both focal and other students). Now they can easily identify the learners for whom the new approaches are working well (and maintain the momentum), as well as those who still require acceleration. Next, they will follow up with these remaining students and their parents to explore different strategies to activate their learning.

### What about the students outside the target subgroups?

Spring results are now available for the other learners in the target grades (K-2), whose “on-trackness” teachers also rated using Authentic Mixed Method Assessment.

As Figure 2 shows, learners outside the target subgroups benefited just as much from the changes made across the system at every level – in the classroom, across the school, and from the central office.

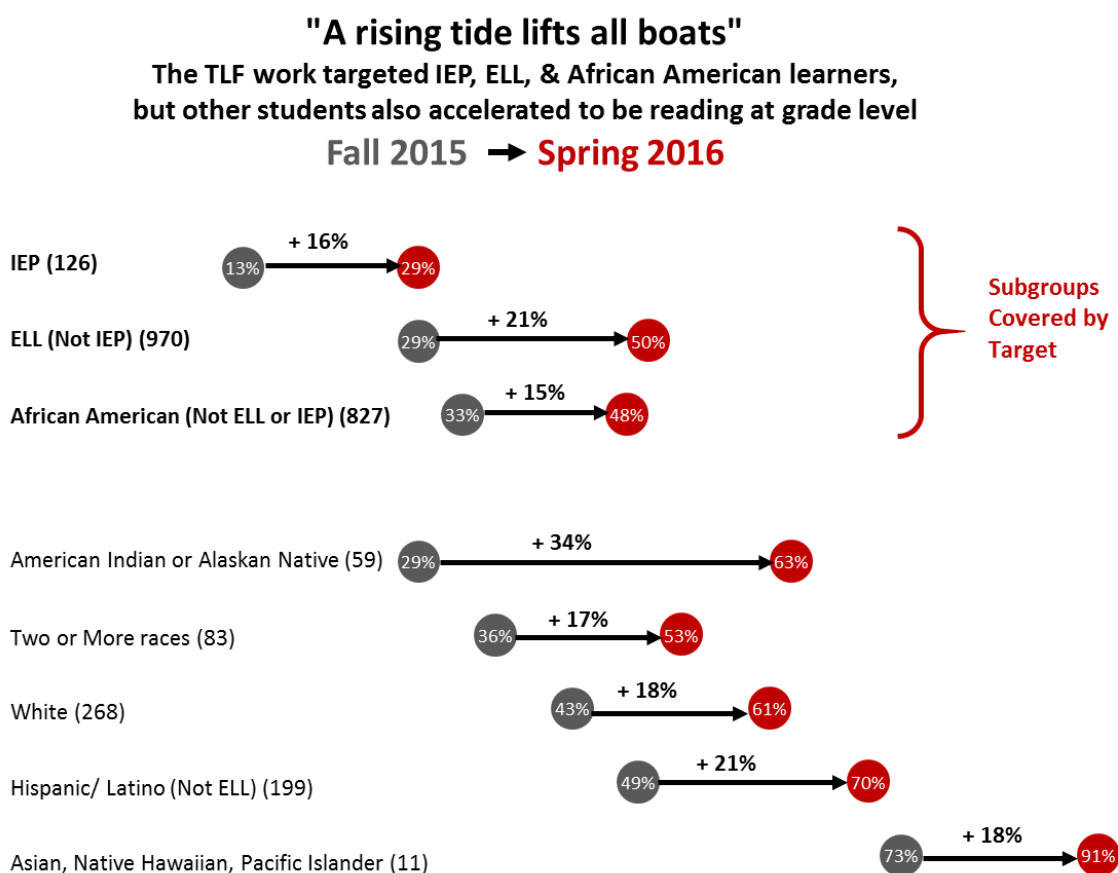


Figure 2. Percent of each Subgroup Rated "Well on Track" or "Geared for Success" in Reading at Grade Level for Grades K-2 (matched data, exact same students) Fall to Spring shifts

## TARGET TWO: MATH

Target Two showed similar results, with strong accelerations into and toward the success zone.

To show progress over the course of the year, we mapped accelerations of the 2,076 students within the target demographics for whom we had ratings at all three time points.

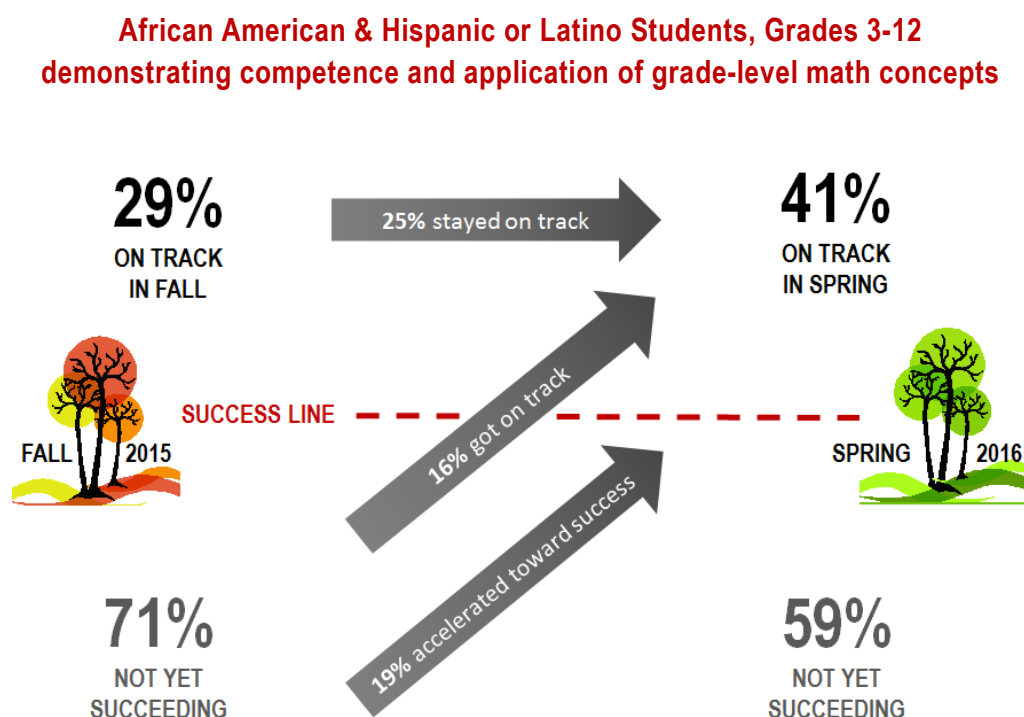


Figure 3. Percentage of Grade 3-12 learners in the target demographics who were rated Well On Track or Geared for Success in *Demonstrating Competence and Application of Grade Level Math Concepts*.  
[Matched data; includes only those students tracked both points.]

### What does this mean in terms of student numbers?

Out of the 2,076 African American and Hispanic or Latino 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders who were tracked at both time points on competence and application of grade-level math concepts:

- 516 students stayed on track all year
- Another 328 students got on track during the year
- 399 students accelerated toward success (more than a year's progress in one year)
- 623 students made standard academic progress over the year but are not yet succeeding
- 123 students slipped further behind and are still not experiencing success.



### What about the students outside the target subgroups?

Spring results are now available for the other learners in the target grades (3-12), who teachers also rated using Authentic Mixed Method Assessment.

Results show that learners outside the target subgroups benefited just as much, if not even more, from the changes made across the system and at every level – in the classroom, across the school, and from the central office.

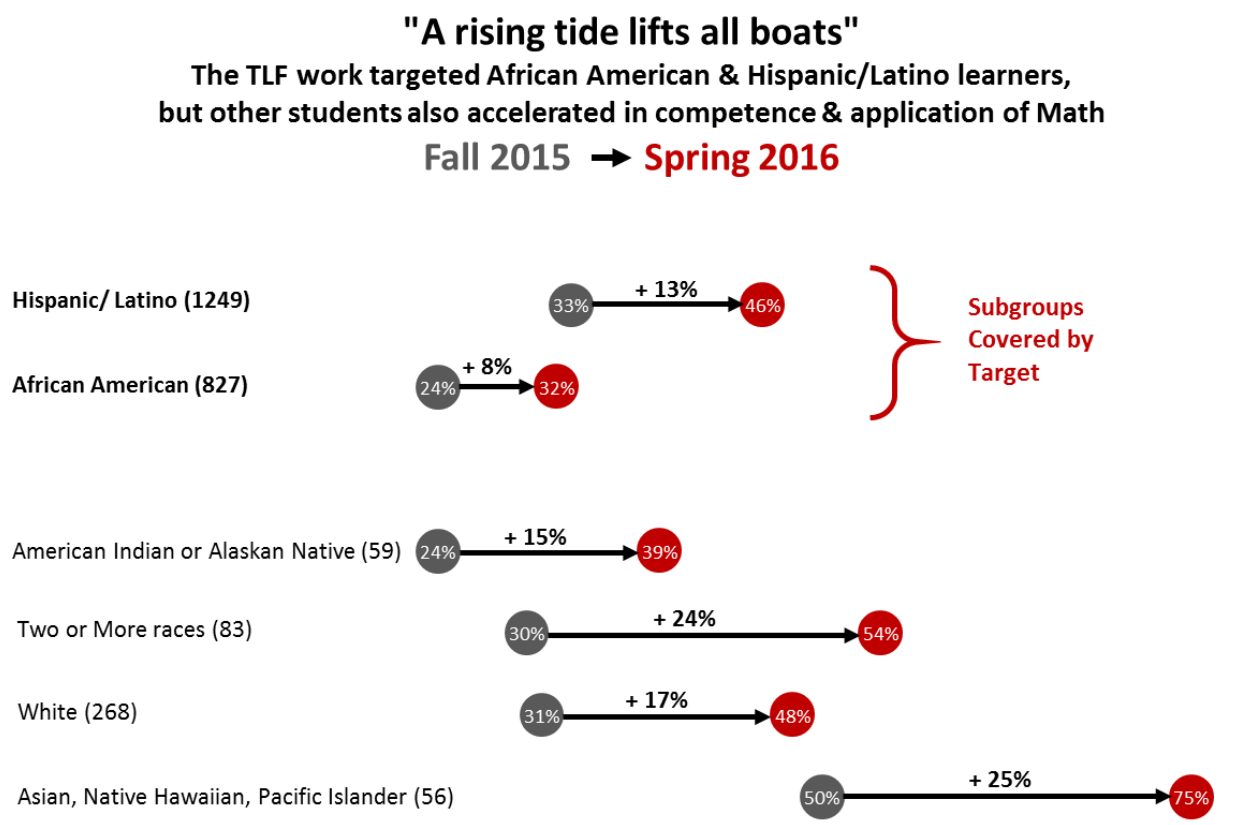


Figure 4. % of each subgroup rated "Well on Track" or "Geared for Success" in *Demonstrating Competence and Application of Grade Level Math Concepts* Grades 3-12 (Matched data) Fall to Spring shifts

The bottom line: In just one academic year, many students who had never before succeeded are already showing significant acceleration toward reading at grade level and demonstrating and applying math concepts.

Note: Target Three results will be analyzed after the Spring rating period, and a revised version of this report, incorporating results on all three targets, will be available in late June.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

In the 2014-2015 year, only about 60-70% of students across the OKCPS system were attending regularly, defined as fewer than 5 absences per semester. Once attendance drops below those levels, learning is impacted significantly. Put another way, 30-40% of students had problematically high levels of absenteeism (both excused and unexcused).

In the very first semester of the TLF work (Fall 2015), the number of students who attended regularly in the 12 TLF schools rose 23%, so that 87% of students had fewer than five absences (Figure 5). The average across the other 77 schools barely changed, and over a third of students still had absence rates that were problematically high.

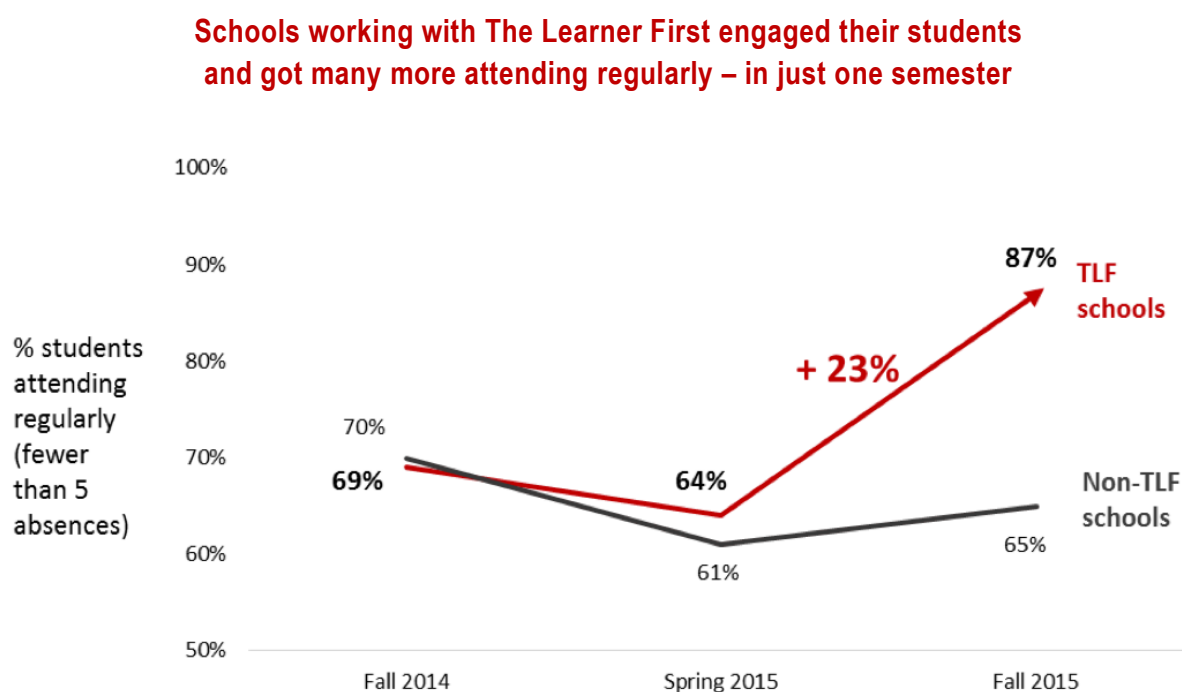


Figure 5. % students with five or fewer excused absences during the given semester; comparison of the 12 schools participating in TLF vs. the other 77 OKCPS schools.

Note that attendance was not improved via any “crackdown” on attendance.

The Learner First approach is about changing the school experience so that kids want to come every day.

# THE LEARNER FIRST PROCESS

The Learner First Process consists of six key elements that bring deep change to life:

1. A whole-system approach driven by change teams
2. Five assumption shatterers to help precipitate deep change
3. Powerful systemwide targets to focus the effort
4. Learning from the focal students and their parents/families
5. Making the important measurable (what gets measured gets focused on)
6. Deep inquiry tools to help lift system capability

## 1. A WHOLE-SYSTEM APPROACH DRIVEN BY CHANGE TEAMS

Change teams are formed at multiple levels:

- Central Office Change Team: the superintendent and cabinet – they start the work first.
- Each school forms a change team consisting of: the principal, other leaders and influencers, teachers and staff, parents, students, a central office leadership team member, community members, service providers.
- In OKCPS, City and County Health have also put one person on each change team.

Change teams are guided through The Learner First process, supported by tools and frameworks. They learn how to design and drive change themselves.

## 2. FIVE ASSUMPTION SHATTERERS TO HELP PRECIPITATE DEEP CHANGE

We begin with five assumption shatterers:

1. Kids aren't failing in the system; the system is failing the kids.
2. The only morally defensible mindset is 100% success.
3. Equal treatment leads to inequitable outcomes.
4. Parents and families are the best experts on their own children, and we need their knowledge to help us ignite their kids.
5. If we focus on a very specific few (the learners who have been least well served), we can create deep system-wide shifts that benefit everyone.

Using The Learner First process and tools, change teams “interrogate” the system through the eyes of the learners who have been least well served. When the system is re-gearred so that they thrive, everyone else does too.

### 3. POWERFUL SYSTEM-WIDE TARGETS TO FOCUS THE EFFORT

Three systemwide targets focus the District's work with The Learner First.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; line-height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; font-weight: bold; font-size: 24px;">1</div> <p>100% of our IEP, ELL, &amp; African American students Grades K-2 will be reading at grade level.</p> | <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; line-height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; font-weight: bold; font-size: 24px;">2</div> <p>100% of our African American &amp; Hispanic/Latino students Grades 3-12 will demonstrate competency and application of grade-level math concepts.</p> | <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; line-height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; font-weight: bold; font-size: 24px;">3</div> <p>100% of our Native American, African American, and Hispanic/Latino high school students will be present, engaged, achieving, and on track for graduation.</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

#### What's important to note about the targets?

- The targets focus specifically on the subgroups that have been least well served by the system, not "all kids".
- Target outcomes are not test scores (or graduation rates, or any other single indicator). Rather, they are defined in a way that captures what is most important, not just what is easily or traditionally measured.
- 100% is a powerful mindset. There are no acceptable casualty rates. Immutable fact. We may not get there in one surge, but we don't give up until every single learner is thriving.

*"We are preparing them for LIFE – not a life of test taking!"*

-- John Addison,  
Associate Principal,  
John Adams Elementary

#### How do the targets and the TLF work align with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?

ESSA Requirements	The Learner First work
States, with districts, have to identify schools where subgroups of students are struggling.	Participating schools are those with significant numbers of students within the demographics experiencing the least success across the system. Those struggling subgroups are the focus of the TLF work.
Schools have to come up with an evidence-based plan to help the particular group of students who are falling behind, such as minority students or those in special education.	The Learner First™ process includes a systematic diagnosis for Understanding the Real Problem for struggling learners. Based on this analysis, educators and change teams design evidence-based plans to strengthen not just teaching and learning but also the school and district systems' alignment around it. Deep change works when every part of the system supports and encourages the practices that help these groups of students thrive.
Districts must monitor these plans.	By being on school change teams, the central office has its finger on the pulse of what changes are happening in schools, and why. A comprehensive outcome tracking system helps ensure that all struggling subgroups are not just progressing but accelerating.

## 4. LEARNING FROM THE FOCAL STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS/FAMILIES

At every level of the system, the focal students help us work out how to realign the system.

1. Each teacher chooses 3 or 4 focal students to work with who are struggling the most (not the so-called “bubble kids” who are achieving just below expectations). Teachers meet with these focal students and their parents to find out who they are, what they love, and who they aspire to be in the world. They then design personalized learning experiences that will engage focal students and ignite their learning.
2. The school change team learns from teachers about what helps focal students thrive and what makes it hard for them to succeed. They systematically remove barriers and create a school environment where focal learners feel welcome and nurtured to thrive and succeed.
3. The central office change team learns from their own experiences on school change teams. Using these insights, and with guidance and coaching from The Learner First, they critically examine their policies, resourcing, service provision, assessment and evaluation systems for students, teachers, and schools. Their job is to align every aspect of the district system to support change that will work for the focal learners. And make it sustainable. The focus is on deep system shift rather than pull-out programs.
4. At every level of the system, from the classroom to the boardroom, every decision made is critically examined through the eyes of the focal students. Does this decision support or impede the creation of learning environments where these learners thrive and succeed? Does it perpetuate the status quo or help precipitate genuine change?

Start small and tightly focused; keep the change manageable.

Almost every change team has at least two student members.

Students also participate in the whole-district events and add richness to the discussions based on their lived experiences as learners within the system.



## 5. MAKING THE IMPORTANT MEASURABLE

**What gets measured gets focused on.**

If we focus on test scores as the One True Measure of Achievement → teachers feel pressured to “teach to the test”.

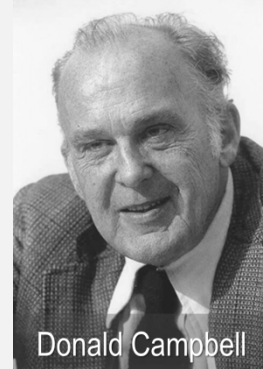
When we focus on more meaningful outcomes, like understanding and applying concepts in the real world → teachers create real-world learning experiences that help kids grasp concepts.

As was pointed out 40 years ago in **Campbell's Law**:

*"Achievement tests may well be valuable indicators of general school achievement under conditions of normal teaching aimed at general competence.*

*But when test scores become the goal of the teaching process, they both lose their value as indicators of educational status and distort the educational process in undesirable ways."*

Campbell, Donald T. (1976). *Assessing the Impact of Planned Social Change*.  
Hanover, NH: The Public Affairs Center, Dartmouth College.



Donald Campbell

**Authentic Mixed Method Assessment (AMMA)** synthesizes a range of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, to assess individual student achievement, or “on-trackness.”<sup>1</sup>

Up to seven different pieces of evidence are incorporated to assess students on each of the targets. The following are data points used by teachers in assessing students on Target One:

- Formal assessments/tests (e.g. CRT, STAR, etc.)
- The Learner First™ Reading Enjoyment Survey
- Student work products
- Teacher observations
- Teacher discussions with students and their families

Teachers use rubric-guided professional judgment to synthesize multiple pieces of evidence into an overall rating that is simple to track, but not simplistic or narrow in what it captures.<sup>2</sup>

By allowing students a range of ways to demonstrate their knowledge, where test scores are one evidence point and not the whole story, teachers are able to track progress more authentically.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1: Authentic Mixed Method Assessment (p. 16) for a full description of AMMA.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2: Student Success Rubrics (p. 17) for information about The Learner First™ Student Success Rubrics.



## 6. DEEP INQUIRY TOOLS TO GUIDE LIFTS IN SYSTEM CAPABILITY

With the help of their TLF Change Catalysts, Change Teams in schools, the central office, and (ideally) the State DOE use The Learner First™ **school capability rubrics** to guide their evidence-based inquiry into “How strong are we on ...?”

<b>Understanding the Real Problem</b>	Root cause diagnosis to work out what to fix first and fast, why, and how well different approaches are working.
<b>Parents as Real Partners</b>	Learning from parent and family expertise to truly understand every learner’s interests and aspirations.
<b>Teaching for Zero Failure</b>	An unshakable belief that every single learner <u>can</u> and <u>will</u> succeed – and teaching that makes this a reality.
<b>A Culture of Belonging and High Expectations For All</b>	A school culture where <u>every</u> learner feels they belong; is expected & supported to succeed on what matters for them.
<b>Leadership for Accelerated Change</b>	A critical mass of people who effectively lead and manage the change right through to results for learners.

The rubrics are grounded in the best available evidence and practical know-how about the capabilities every school and education system needs to accelerate the learners who need it most.



*The change team from John Marshall Middle-High School digs deep into the issues.*

## WHY IT WORKS – A NESTED APPROACH

The fundamental core of The Learner First approach is developing genuine personal relationships among the teacher, the learner, and their parents and family. It's about connecting with and getting to know each student *as a person* (who they are, what they love, and how they learn best, both in and out of school).

Teachers use their understanding of each learner to design personalized learning experiences that will interest, engage, and ignite them.

This core element is infused into every level of the system (see Figure 6).

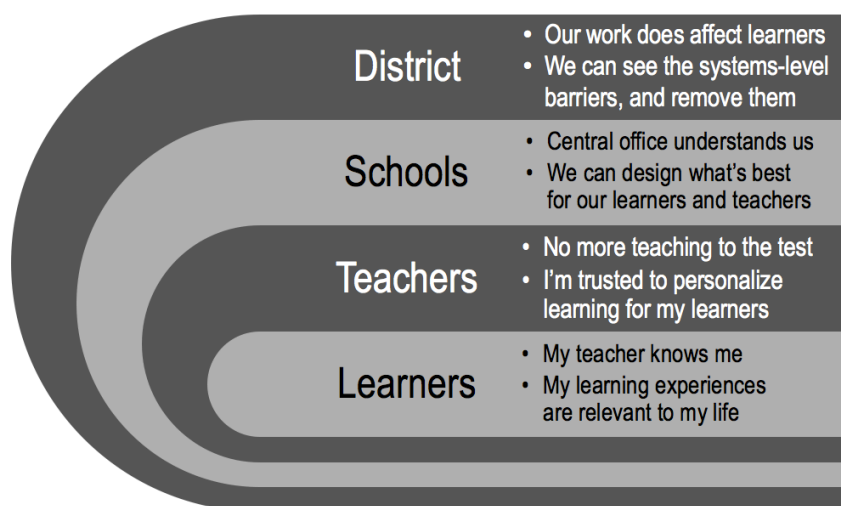


Figure 6. A nested view of how The Learner First™ approach translates at each level of the system

When the school and the wider district system changes to provide that freedom and to enable creativity, teachers know that leaders trust and support them to design different learning experiences that work for each learner. They no longer need to follow a one-size-fits-all curriculum pacing guide or “teach to the test.”

The Central Office sets the tone and priorities for the whole District, and, by being directly involved in school change teams, gains a much better understanding of the needs and realities of individual schools. Central Office leaders have a much clearer line of sight to how their work has a real effect on learners. They can see the systems-level barriers and remove them; identify needed supports and prioritize them; find out what's not working and take those off educators' long list of requirements.

School leaders, in turn, develop a much stronger connection with the Central Office through the change team member and the whole-district TLF events (in which half of the time is devoted to leadership discussions among principals and the central office).

OKCPS has some outstanding examples of taking a whole-systems approach to change.

## EXAMPLE 1: CURRICULUM GUIDANCE FOR PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Curriculum pacing guides had been standard practice in OKCPS, as they are right across the United States. The guides were intended to ensure that all learners were delivered a high quality curriculum in a consistent way, regardless of which school or class they were in.

What we now understand is that “one size does not fit all”. What each learner needs is different. The most effective way to teach the principles and concepts in the curriculum is for each teacher to contextualize and personalize both the content and the teaching method so they make sense for and engage the learners in front of them.

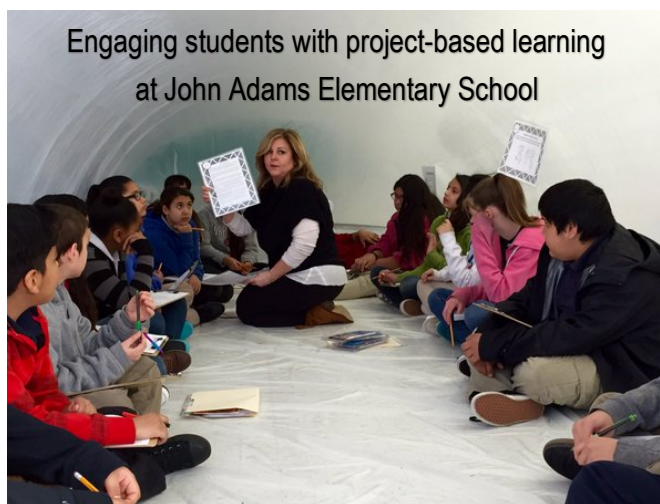
In working with the focal students using The Learner First™ approach, schools were encouraging teachers to move toward personalized learning. But from the perspective of teachers, the pacing guides sent a clear message from the Central Office that seemed inconsistent with the change. Some of them felt unsafe trying anything that went “off script”.

The Central Office made a bold move by eliminating pacing guides altogether, and then redesigning curriculum resources to support personalized learning approaches. This not only *allowed* schools and teachers to adapt their curricula for each individual learner; it *supported* them to do so by providing essential know-how and exemplars.

## EXAMPLE 2: ASSESSMENT ALIGNED TO PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Some of The Learner First schools began exploring project-based learning as another way to engage learners and help them understand real-world applications of what they were learning.

John Adams Elementary School was one of the leaders in this area, embarking on a biosphere project to help students explore





the concepts of ecosystems and where they fitted into them.<sup>3</sup>

Although project-based learning was clearly in alignment with The Learner First work across the district, it was a major departure from the test practice that teachers would ordinarily have had students working on, especially in the Spring.

OKCPS leadership has always been clear that a focus on test scores alone would be counterproductive for the kind of innovation needed across the system. Instead, OKCPS chose to track student success using a broader, more encompassing mix of evidence using The Learner First's Authentic Mixed Method Assessment approach.

By publicly declaring – and showing – that school and leader success would not be judged by test scores alone, a clear signal was sent across the system that it was safe to try out this innovative approach to teaching and learning.



*The change team from F.D. Moon Elementary enjoying the discussion with colleagues.*

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<sup>3</sup> "District schools implement more hands-on learning style", *Oklahoma Gazette*, February 17, 2016.  
<http://okgazette.com/2016/02/17/district-schools-implement-more-hands-on-learning-style/>

### EXAMPLE 3: OKCPS'S RESPONSE TO THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT: ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE ISSUES

#### OCR Case No. 07-14-1149: Quick Facts:

- August 2014: The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) notified the District that it was opening for investigation an allegation that the district discriminates against Hispanic and African American students by disciplining them more frequently and more harshly on the basis of race than similarly situated white students.
- February 2016: OCR submitted a proposal to resolve the allegation. *The proposed resolution agreement requires the district to engage in an extensive, in-depth process to correct disproportionate discipline by race.*

The OCR Agreement included a number of key requirements:

- Designation of Discipline Supervisor
- Collaborate with Experts in Non-discriminatory Discipline Practices
- Root Cause Analysis
- Annual Forums, Student Groups and Student Code of Conduct Committee
- Policies Practices and Procedures
- Student and Staff Training; School Resource Officers
- Support for Students and School Climate Surveys
- Data Collection and Analysis

#### First Steps with The Learner First: Root Cause Analysis

OCR Requirement	District Response <sup>4</sup>
In consultation with the Director [of School Climate and Student Discipline] and/or expert(s), start the process of examining the root cause(s) of the racial disparity in the discipline of students in the District.	In July of 2015, the District entered into a partnership with The Learner First, an educational services company that specializes in whole system change, including root cause analysis

<sup>4</sup> Source: 4/4/2016 Presentation to the OKCPS Board by the District Attorney

The District was able to draw on what had been learned from The Learner First schools through their focal learners, most of whom were from within the demographics identified in the OCR allegation, and use this to help them understand the root causes of behavior and discipline issues.

The Oklahoma City Public Schools leadership team (Central Office Change Team) prioritized their November 2015 change team meeting agenda to *Understand the Real Problem* underlying behavior and discipline.

The following summary synthesizes the discussion and clarifies the key elements that emerged.

### BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE: OKCPS'S PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH IN A NUTSHELL

**Overarching theme:** HUMANITY

**Key ideas:** Discipline is a symptom of a set of deeper problems: disconnect/disengagement.  
Treating this as a “behavior control” issue won’t work.  
Our approach is to *address the real problem*, not just the symptom.

**Key drivers:** (A) genuine personal relationships and (B) school life that is engaging

**Top priority:** Relationships. Genuinely connect with students and their parents as people, know who they are and what they love, ensure they feel (and are) heard.

**2<sup>nd</sup> priority:** Engaging Learning Experiences. Create authentic learning experiences that will engage and interest students, so they don’t act out.

**3<sup>rd</sup> priority:** Effective Classroom Management. Support educators to create learning environments that *prevent* behavior problems, and to deal with any issues quickly, effectively, and respectfully, so they don’t escalate or damage relationships.

**4<sup>th</sup> priority:** Additional Support, Behavior Management, and Discipline. Work humanely, fairly, and respectfully with kids whose needs extend beyond what engaging learning experiences and effective classroom management can address.

The Central Office Change Team recognized that their current response to behavior and discipline issues was in the reverse order, starting with sanctions and crackdowns designed to get “disruptive” students out of class and out of school so that teachers can get on with teaching “the good kids”.

Such an approach doesn’t address the real problem. We need to find out what is really going on for these learners and how we the adults can together create an environment that elicits positive and engaged behavior.



## What does a systemic and proactive *humanity-driven* response to Behavior and Discipline look like in practice?

When responding to a school/teacher/learner that has identified or is dealing with “behavior issues”, our first step (once safety has been secured) is to *reframe the issue in terms of the real problem*. What is causing the behavior?

By taking time to truly understand what is causing the behavior, we can collaboratively problem solve an answer. Almost invariably, the real problem is rooted in a myriad of causes: the learning conditions for the student, home circumstances, a trauma, health issues, or a wider systemic issue. Unpacking these will enable everyone within the edusystem to collaboratively create the most appropriate mix of solutions.

The Central Office Change Team agreed: ***This is about humanity.***

Behavior and discipline issues can only be resolved by developing a genuine and caring relationship with each learner, each parent, each teacher, each administrator, each central office personnel, all the way through to every person who lives in Oklahoma City.

There has never been a more pressing need to change our own adult behavior and discipline systems, policies, behaviors, and beliefs to nurture and grow the learners who need us most.

## WHAT IS NEXT FOR OKCPS AND THE LEARNER FIRST?

Next steps for OKCPS and TLF include:

- District-wide celebration of the learning and successes from a full year of partnership between OKCPS and TLF, happening May 18th.
- Collection of Spring ratings for Target Three, with analysis of findings to be shared with OKCPS in late June.
- Critical examination of evidence and feedback from the first full year of work, and design of action plans built around identified successes and areas for improvement.
- Planning for TLF’s expansion throughout OKCPS to include additional schools looking to engage in the change process. The Board has signaled a desire to add a second cohort of 12 to 24 schools in 2016-2017, and then offer it to all 89 schools in the third year. However, extensive state budget cuts mean that external funding will be required to achieve this.
- Building in long-term sustainability for the change. This means building and consolidating school and system capability to design and lead change using The Learner First™ process and tools.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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President & Chief Destiny Changer

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For more information about who we are, please see Appendix 3: The Learner First Team (p. 25).

## APPENDIX 1: AUTHENTIC MIXED METHOD ASSESSMENT

The Learner First uses Authentic Mixed Method Assessment (AMMA) to evaluate progress and achievement of learners.

While test scores are a useful indicator included in AMMA, they are only one part of the student performance picture. AMMA takes into consideration a broad range of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to provide a fuller, more authentic look at how a learner is really doing.

The evidence used in AMMA varies from district to district and from target to target, but includes:

- Formal assessments such as standardized tests
- Student survey data (e.g., to ascertain whether they see the relevance of math)
- Student work products (e.g., completed projects, homework assignments)
- Teacher observations
- Parent and family insights into the student's grasp of concepts in the real world
- Interviews with students (e.g., gauging their understanding by asking them to explain)

To facilitate the synthesis of these varied indicators, AMMA uses rubrics to guide teacher professional judgment. Rubrics are designed in collaboration with districts. They define what it looks like for a student to be at each level of the spectrum at five different levels:

- Geared for Success
- Well On Track
- Possibly On Track
- Not Yet On Track
- Substantially Off Track

Using these rubrics, teachers can interpret and synthesize the full range of evidence, and use their professional judgment to determine how “on track” a learner really is.

## APPENDIX 2: STUDENT SUCCESS RUBRICS

The following describes what “Well On Track” looks like for systemwide Targets One and Two, along with a list of the key sources of evidence teachers use to make on-track ratings.

Target One: 100% of our IEP, ELL, and African American students Grades K-2 will be reading at grade level	
<p><b>WELL ON TRACK</b></p> <p><b>Quick definition:</b> Reading at grade level – with a genuine love of reading definitely emerging.</p>	<p><b>Overall picture:</b> Reading skills or reading readiness (e.g., oral vocabulary, storytelling ability, awareness of rhyme, familiarity with books) are right where they need to be, which supports the learner’s ability to succeed at his or her current grade level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For students whose only language is English:</b> in English only</li> <li>• <b>For students who speak more than one language:</b> Reading skills or reading readiness are at the required level in English; they may be somewhat below in the strongest other language, but are developing well in that language, to the level the student and parents/family need and desire.</li> <li>• <b>For students in dual language units:</b> Reading skills or reading readiness are at the required level in the primary language of instruction; they will be close to the needed level in the strongest other language, and developing strongly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence about reading level</b> should be level appropriate and include a mix of (a) formal assessments/tests; (b) observations of the child reading or interacting with books (not just worksheets); and (c) a parent/caregiver’s estimation of reading level or readiness (particularly relevant for bilingual/multilingual students’ other language/s).</p> <p><b>Evidence about enjoyment of reading:</b> Conversations/ interviews/surveys of the student and (where available) parent(s), as well as teacher observation, are likely to show that the student enjoys reading – in English and/or the student’s other language(s). [If enjoyment of reading is very markedly strong or weak and if the reading or reading readiness is on the border between two levels, this may be enough to tip the balance up or down.]</p>
<p><b>Evidence/Data Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STAR 360 Reading level*</li> <li>• The Learner First Reading Enjoyment Survey (K-2; available in English and Spanish)*</li> <li>• Conversations/interviews with students and their parents</li> <li>• Teacher observations</li> <li>• Assessment or estimation of reading level in first/other language (for bilingual students – either a formal assessment or an estimation by the parent or a language-fluent teacher)</li> <li>• In-class work and homework assignments</li> </ul> <p>* STAR 360 reading levels and the TLF Reading Enjoyment Survey interpretations are displayed in The Learner First’s Lighthouse mixed method data platform, where teachers make their evidence-based ratings.</p>	

**Target Two: 100% of our African American and Hispanic/Latino students Grades 3-12 will demonstrate competence and application of grade level math concepts**

## WELL ON TRACK

**Quick definition:** Demonstrating competence and application of grade level math concepts.

### Evidence/Data Points:

- STAR Math scores and interpretation\*
- Last year's state test data (EduSoft Comprehensive OAS; OCCT)\*
- The Learner First™ Relevance of Math Survey\*
- In-class work and homework assignments
- End of course assessments
- Conversations/interviews with students & parents (families)
- Teacher/Parent observations

\* Assessment data and The Learner First™ Math Relevance Survey Score interpretation is displayed in The Learner First's Lighthouse mixed method data platform, where teachers make their evidence-based ratings.

### Description of Evidence:

ALL of the following:

- Achieving at standard in math, or very close to it, for this point in the year (overall teacher judgment based on student coursework, in-class assessments, teacher observation, standardized tests, conversations and interviews with students).
- The learner is regularly applying grade level math concepts to everyday life, even outside the classroom (e.g., as reported or observed by parents, students, and others).
- Generally sees Math as relevant and meaningful for his life (as evidenced by relatively high scores on The Learner First™ Relevance of Math Survey, and/or other observations and discussions with the student).

## APPENDIX 3: THE LEARNER FIRST TEAM

### Joanne McEachen, President & Chief Destiny Changer



Joanne is an internationally recognized whole-system education change leader, originally from New Zealand, where she was responsible for lifting performance of 2,600 schools by redesigning the edusystem. Joanne co-founded The Learner First, where she leads efforts to create whole-system change. She also serves as Global New Measures Director for New Pedagogies for Deep Learning: A Global Partnership. This 10-country, 1000-school initiative includes countries such as Finland, Australia, Uruguay, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Canada, and the USA. Joanne and Jane designed the Deep Learning Progressions and system and school rubrics to guide the NPDL work.

### Dr. Jane Davidson, Co-Founder & Vice President



Jane is recognized globally as the leading expert in the design and use of rubrics for mixed method assessment and evaluation, and has authored the leading text on this subject. Combining this with her deep expertise in systems and organizational culture change, she leads the development of frameworks, tools, and evaluation of The Learner First™ system. Jane is sought after as an author, keynote speaker, and workshop facilitator for her signature approach of methodologically robust but practical evaluation that enables and drives (as well as tracks) whole-system change. She was 2005 recipient of the American Evaluation Association's Marcia Guttentag Award and former Associate Director of the internationally recognized Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

### Dr. Leslie Conery, Lead Change Catalyst



With a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, and grounded by her experience teaching at the elementary and high school levels, Leslie is a creative and results-driven leader with more than 25 years of experience developing strong teams to meet organizational goals. Leslie is Lead Change Catalyst for The Learner First; she coaches the Change Catalysts and feeds their insights back to Jane and Joanne to guide the Central Office Change Team work and to improve TLF's systems and tools. Leslie is an accredited member of the Partnership Brokers Association. The American Society of Association Executives credentials her as a Certified Association Executive.



**Dr. Rodney Hopson, Change Catalyst**

Rodney is an internationally renowned evaluation thought leader; former President of the American Evaluation Association; a Professor in the Division of Educational Psychology, Research Methods, and Education Policy, and Senior Research Fellow, Center for Education Policy and Evaluation at George Mason University. Hopson's research and practice focuses on the analysis and impact of education and schooling on marginalized and underrepresented groups in diverse global and nation-states while seeking solutions to conditions these groups face. As a Learner

First Change Catalyst, Rodney is able to draw on his considerable expertise to bring this social justice-oriented work to life for the learners and educators in Oklahoma City Public Schools.

**Dr. Jacqueline Roebuck Sakho, Change Catalyst**

Dr. Roebuck Sakho is the founder and managing partner at The Restorative Justice Group, a think tank that designs and evaluates restorative justice processes, practices and techniques to facilitate collaborative teams of schools, academy and community. As a Learner First Change Catalyst, Dr. Roebuck Sakho continues to deepen this work by intentionally engaging vulnerable and/or destabilized school communities in the ecological model of systems change.

**Dr. Jennifer Mersman, Chief Data Whisperer**

Dr. Mersman is a multifaceted practitioner with a doctorate in organizational psychology and experience in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. She has published and presented on a variety of topics at professional conferences. Jennifer oversees data collection and analysis and the Learner First™ mixed method data platform, Lighthouse. The context of her professional work has spanned from school districts to the finance industry. Jennifer has taught at the university level, as well as in K-12 education, including alternative class/school structures for at risk students.