

Creative Learning Exchange
The Systems Thinking and Dynamic Modeling
Biennial Conference
June 2004
Stevenson, WA

***THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT: A
REFLECTIVE PLACE FOR SCHOOL AND
DISTRICT LEADERS***

Dennis Arthur Conners, Program Director
Leadership Formation Program
Gonzaga University

The Mission of the Program

- A Parable

A short, simple story from which a moral lesson may be drawn. (Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition)

Two Fundamental Questions

“What kind of person should I, as an educational leader, strive to become?”

What kind of organizational community should I strive to create and maintain?”

Core Values

- Leadership
- Transformational Change
- Equity and Excellence
- Collaborative Decision-Making
- Inquiry and Reflective Practice

Three Modes of Teaching

- **Didactic Instruction**
- **Coaching**
- **Seminars**

The Virtual School District

Mountain Lakes School District

Welcome
Superintendent
News & Events

Our Board
President
Members
Agenda
Minutes

Our Schools
Elementary
Middle School
High School

Strategic Planning
ML Strategic Plan
CASA Information
AYP Information

Financial Info

Policy Manual

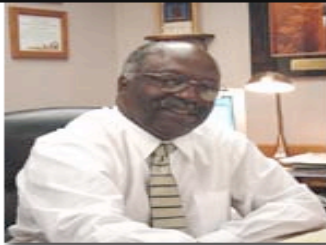
Mountain Lakes




BELIEFS INTO ACTION

Mountain Lakes School District will develop the talents and skills of each student in a safe, personalized, rigorous, relevant and collaborative learning community which honors the unique diversity of each person and which attends to the needs of the whole person so that ALL students have an increased number of future choice options.

Message from the Board President

<p>MLSD Home</p> <p>Welcome Shared Vision Superintendent</p> <p>Our Board President Members Agenda Minutes</p> <p>Our Schools Elementary Middle School High School</p> <p>Strategic Planning ML Strategic Plan CASA Information AYP Information</p> <p>Financial Info</p> <p>Policy Manual</p>		<p>April 5, 2004</p> <p>Dear Neighbors:</p> <p>Welcome and thank you for visiting our school district. On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our online home and to thank you for your continued support.</p> <p>Upon my election as MLSD Board President, I pledged that our efforts would be directed toward district-wide improvement. To this end, Superintendent Mike McGuire and I have worked closely with community stakeholders and members of our exceptional staff and administrative team to identify and promote structures which nurture equity, honor diversity, encourage student achievement. In totality, it is our goal to create a school system which reflects the ever-changing community that we serve and to do so in a way which puts our beliefs as educators into action.</p> <p>At our April 5, 2004 Board Meeting, I was pleased to introduce and support a new Shared Vision for our school district. This statement is more than a guide, it is the embodiment of our passions, beliefs, and desires as educators.</p> <p>In addition to this action, the Board and I also granted authority to Mike and his administrative team to a comprehensive Strategic Plan. Much of this planning is already underway and we, the Board and community, are grateful to the leadership team for their efforts. This plan will be presented to the Board for final approval, and will be the product of our work together to ensure that Mountain Lakes is on the right track.</p> <p>Again, thank you for your support. I look forward to working with you as we strive toward greater achievement for our schools and new successes for our students.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Michael H. Jones, President</p>
---	--	---

High School Page

<p>MLSD Home</p> <p>Welcome Superintendent News & Events</p> <p>Our Board President Members Agenda Minutes</p> <p>Our Schools Elementary Middle School High School</p> <p>Strategic Planning ML Strategic Plan CASA Information AYP Information</p> <p>Financial Info</p> <p>Policy Manual</p>	 <p>High Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chatham High School - <i>Home of the Tigers</i>• Mountain Lakes High School - <i>Home of the Eagles</i>• Mountain View Alternative School
---	--

Chatham High School

Chatham High School

[MLSD Home](#)

[CHS Strategic
Planning](#)

[CASA Info](#)



Welcome to Chatham High School!

Built in 1930, Chatham High School is one of the oldest high schools in the Mountain Lakes School District. Constructed by famed Columbia architect, George Pinnacle, Chatham recently underwent extensive remodeling and an expansion to house the Jeanne Brown Library & Technology Center.

CASA Data

Chatham High School - CASA Information

[MLSD Home](#)

[CHS Home](#)

[CHS Strategic Planning](#)

[CASA Info](#)

11th Grade CASA Trend ~ All Students

School Year	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Math	14.8	18.4	29.1	31.3	37.7
Reading	39.1	40.8	48.6	52.7	59.1
Writing	22.9	13.1	28.0	38.4	52.9
Listening	56.6	60.2	71.0	74.1	71.6
Science					24.9

11th Grade CASA Trend ~ Male Students

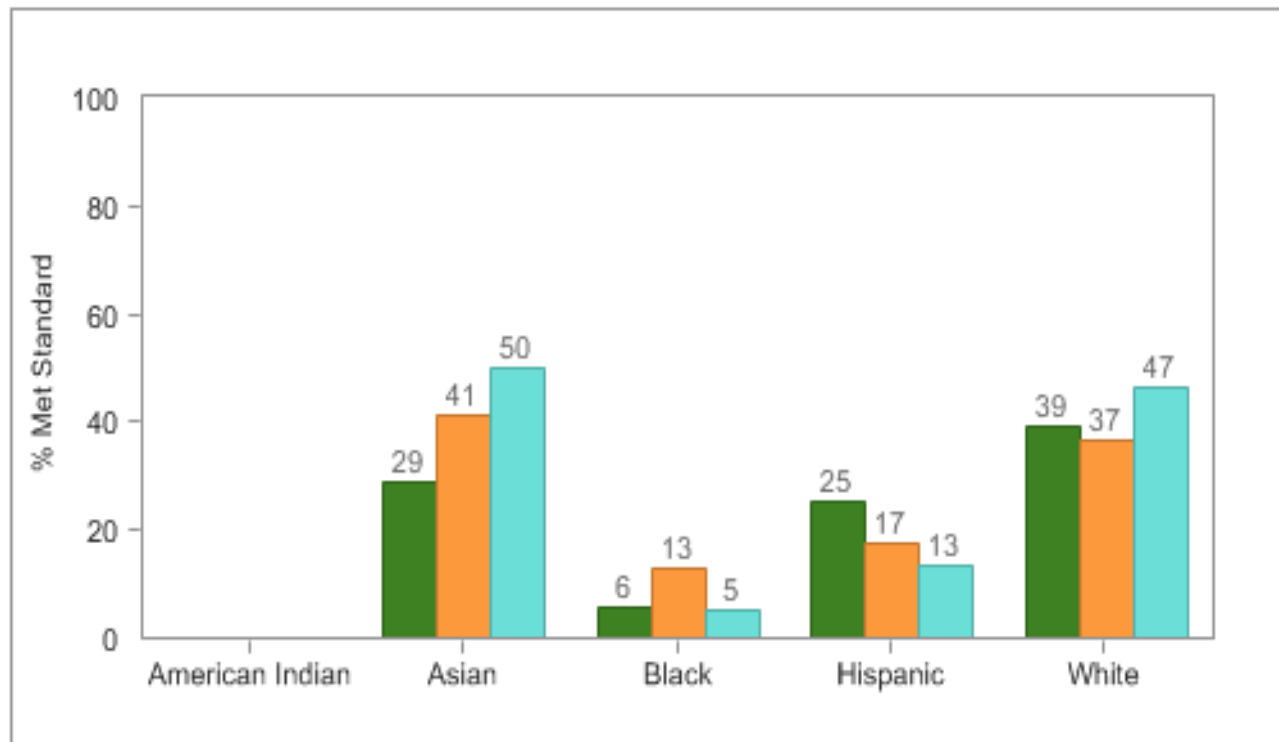
School Year	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Math	27.6	26.6	36.9
Reading	39.7	43.1	55.4
Writing	19.0	25.7	46.9
Listening	66.7	64.2	70.0
Science			28.5

11th Grade CASA Trend ~ Female Students

School Year	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Math	31.0	36.3	39.5
Reading	60.7	62.8	64.5
Writing	40.4	51.3	59.7
Listening	76.4	84.1	74.2
Science			21.8

CASA Trend Data

11th Grade CASA ~ Ethnic Trend, Math



The Challenge to School and District Leaders ₁

- **A Case Scenario**

Issues for Leaders

- **Focus on Learning**
- **Professional Development**
- **Environment**
- **Strategy**
- **Coherence**

Systems Approach to How Leaders Influence Learning

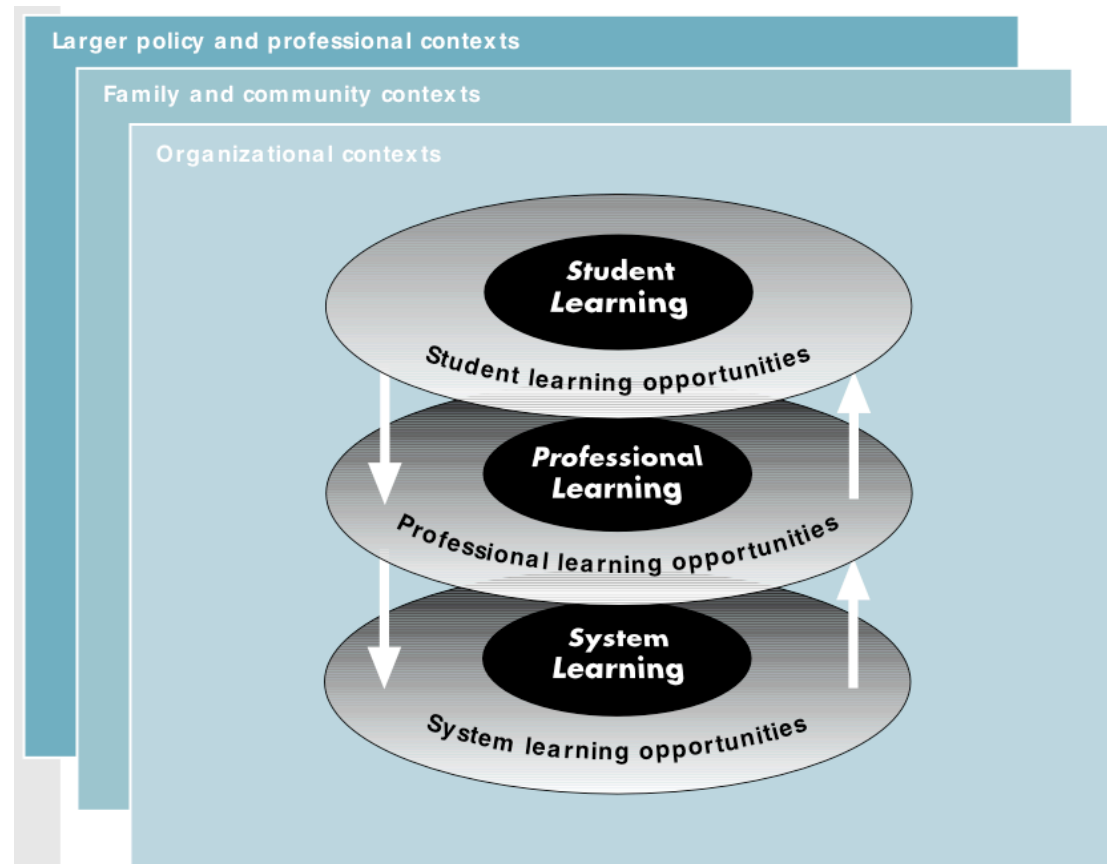
Learning in Context

Student Learning

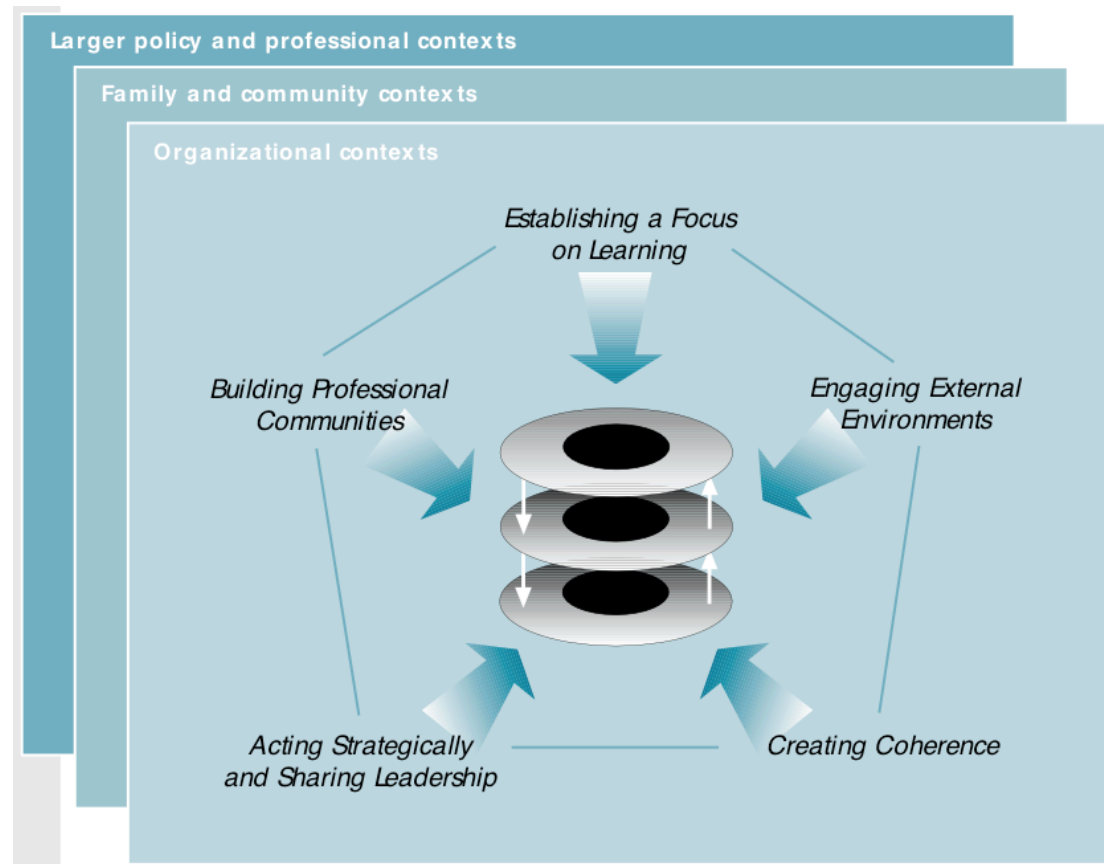
Professional Learning

Systems Learning

Three Learning Agendas in Context



Overview of Leading for Learning



Barriers to Learning in the Virtual School District ₂

- **Dynamic Complexity**
- **Limited Information**
- **Confounding Variables and Ambiguity**
- **Flawed Cognitive Maps**
- **Defensive Routines**
- **Judgmental Errors and Biases**
- **Implementation Errors**

Images of Possibilities

- *Leaders with clear pictures of where they are going and the multiple routes to reach that destination are better able to make learning opportunities for more powerful and equitable learning than they tend to be now.*

Getting There

- *Systems Thinking as a reflective tool can help leaders visualize powerful, equitable learning and the professional and system learning necessary to get there. The tool can help clarify core values, promote professional community, and highlight the need for inquiry and evidence in the improvement process.*

References

- **1. Knapp, Michael S, Copland, Michael A., and Talbert, Joan E. (2003) *Leading for Learning. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.***
- **2. Sterman, John D. (2000) *Business Dynamics: Systems Thinking and Modeling for a Complex World.***