



Dear Members,

One year ago I was privileged to become the CEO of Phi Delta Kappa. As a former superintendent, central office leader and teacher, I am excited about applying my experience in schools and districts to the challenge of revitalizing PDK. The Board hired me to lead our transformation from solely a membership organization to one that builds on our strengths and legacy in order to serve 21st century educators. During this past year I have been speaking and listening to members about what they expect and need from PDK. I have intentionally refrained from formally communicating with the broader membership during this time, as I want to provide specifics about our direction. Now that our strategic direction is set and exciting things are starting to happen, I will be sending out a monthly newsletter to members. We've been especially busy in the last few months and I would like to share some exciting news and changes. It is my hope that these updates will open a dialogue between myself, staff, and members to reform and resurrect our organization. My email is CEO@pdkintl.org; I am looking forward to feedback from you.



2016 Educators Rising National Conference



Educators Rising Standards Release



Josh Starr on Anti-Racist School System Leadership

After reflecting on the organization's past and future, I am proud to inform you of a number of changes and initiatives that are underway to bring PDK International back into relevance and to restore

our sense of purpose. Our purpose is our underlying mission: we believe that every child deserves a highly skilled professional teaching them every day.

PDK International has been referred to both as the umbrella of a family of associations and as the PDK association itself, which has led to some confusion in the past. Because of some of the new initiatives we are undertaking, we have begun looking at our work, from budgeting to how we refer to projects, in a programmatic way. What is becoming apparent is the need to eliminate the confusion between the association and the umbrella. After all, while *Kappan*, scholarships, study tour travel, book club and other aspects are PDK association related, Educators Rising, Pi Lambda Theta (PLT), new consultative work, and other new initiatives are not.

Our greater PDK team is growing and working hard to implement new strategic directions, and I have been working to gain helpful and positive feedback for our future growth. We have a few poker chips in the fire, but I can update you on a few: With our commitment to returning PDK to relevance we have begun adding to the talent and manpower necessary to make our transition. It is important to bring talent to task in line with our program needs. In addition to hiring Albert Chen as our COO, we have brought on a Marketing and Communications Specialist in Larissa Hageman, an Executive Associate in Nicole David, a new Senior Director of Development and Engagement in Katrina Breese, and a Harvard School of Education Resident in Dwight Rhodes. In August, we will also welcome Gislaine Ngounou as our new Chief Program Officer. On the consultative side, we are working to develop a superintendent transition service that will be deployed later this summer. We are collaborating with a Kellogg grant recipient on an initiative to improve literacy for African-American third grade boys through cultural competency and community engagement in three urban districts. As these developments are finalized, I will give you more details.

Work has begun to better understand chapter and member needs and direction including town halls, through conversations with a number of members, past-PDK leadership, Chapter presidents, and receptions at the Educators Rising conference and chapter visits. The reaction has been quite positive. A big take away has been the welcoming of PDK news and the reconnection of communication with the national office. This, in turn, has led to the beginning of a more structured communication plan with Chapters and members including the resurrection of this monthly update. As always, more work in this area needs to be done, and your feedback is a crucial aspect of this turnaround.

Educators Rising

A quickly growing branch of the larger PDK is Educator's Rising. Educators Rising membership reached 14,940, which surpassed FEA's all-time record. The Educators Rising National Conference ended the year on an action-packed high note on the campus of Boston University from June 24-27. Over

1,000 rising educators from across the globe — this year we had attendees from China and Department of Defense schools in Europe — converged on Boston for competitions, presentations, networking, and fun.

In a landmark moment for Educators Rising and PDK, we released Educators Rising Standards on June 22 with an event attended by about 100 at NEA headquarters in Washington, DC. The audience of 100 included aspiring educators joined with education sector leaders including Sharon Robinson, Peggy Brookins, Lily Eskelsen Garcia, and myself to discuss the significance of the release of the standards. Check out this [quick, photo-filled summary](#) of the event. Also, AACTE featured the release of Educators Rising Standards on their excellent “Ed Prep Matters” [blog](#), and NEA put out a [press release](#). At the standards release event, NEA’s Andy Coons announced an additional \$100K grant to support the development of the EdRising Academy curriculum and Educators Rising micro-credentials.

Kappan Magazine

Kappan is on hiatus this summer, but we are posting new articles from the 2015-16 issues every week at kappanonline.org. Although *Kappan* takes a break for the summer, the *Kappan* staff has assembled a collection of the best articles from the past year (*Kappan* Must Reads) and shared those with readers online. In the past, those have been in a single PDF, and we’ve offered links to the same articles through the Sage institutional platform. This year, the staff has created a new mini-web site where we will publish these *Kappan* articles in HTML format with links to PDFs from the magazines. Members will still be able to link to the Sage site. In addition, we’re posting one of the *Kappan* Classic articles each week. These are articles that were published by *Kappan* before 2000, such as Dylan William’s original “black box” article and Martin Haberman’s article about the pedagogy of poverty.

PDK Poll

The PDK poll went into the field right on schedule. Langer Research Associates has been a terrific partner, and we are very excited with the results. The PDK Poll will be released August 30th at the National Press Club. This is a week later than usual, but still ahead of the Labor Day weekend. Please keep an eye on your email for the Poll Results leading up the release date.

Membership

A couple of months ago our Board Chair Douglas Christensen, wrote in an open letter to membership that, *“PDK’s membership has declined precipitously, from 130,000 members to 15,000 members today. If PDK is going to survive and continue to serve public education as the prestigious*

organization it always has been, then its leadership must rethink how to build on its strengths and legacy as it moves into the future." The efforts that we are sharing, some in their nascent state and others with more traction, are a glimpse into the rebuilding of PDK, its purpose in the educational landscape, and its responsibility to its members. To thrive and succeed, PDK will have to work on the pre-service in Educators Rising, the recognition for up and coming educators in PLT, and most importantly to build a PDK membership that is worthy of people wanting to join, rather than rest upon a reputation that is rapidly disappearing from the social consciousness.

As you can see, PDK International is alive and well and poised to return to the education stage as a relevant and prominent player. There is much work to be done however, and I am looking forward to your input and feedback on what it is that you want your organization to be.



Josh Starr

CEO of Phi Delta Kappa International

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