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Identify the opportunities for you and your colleagues to collaborate.

YOU AND YOUR PRINCIPAL—YOU'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!

This message is for both the principal and the teacher! I ask that you consider the challenges that you face together in addressing students' learning. If you are a principal, I challenge you to take a proactive approach to your teachers' and students' learning. If you are a teacher, I challenge you to include the principal in sharing evidence of your students' learning. I invite both of you to consider this question: "Does our school exemplify a learning environment for adults as well as students?" Identify the opportunities embedded in the school day and the school year that invite you and your colleagues to collaborate on improving student learning.

In this era of accountability and extremely tight budgets, remember that *everyone* is responsible for instruction. Whether you are a teacher or a principal, it is a time to reflect on your practice and grow professionally. Target common planning times and grade- or course-level sessions that provide opportunities to share questions, insights, and strategies from both the administrative and teaching perspectives. Principals, I encourage you to structure these sessions of sharing among teachers as a way to learn from good teaching practices.

Good principals support professional development to address their teachers' needs. I invite both of you, teacher and principal, to work together to establish a protocol for analyzing students' work. Carefully select samples of students' work and create nonthreatening opportunities for teachers and the principal to share insights as they use the samples as windows into the development of students' thinking. Good principals also provide opportunities for teachers to examine curriculum, including the connections to state standards and assessment frameworks,

local curriculum guides, and NCTM and other professional recommendations. It's important to identify the focal points—the "big ideas"—and their progression over time across all grade levels.

Professional conversations must include thorough examinations of the assessments used to measure students' performance. Ideally, the assessments should call on students to perform higher-order analysis and synthesis, as well as demonstrate efficiency in using routine skills. These abilities are not automatic or easy for students to attain or for teachers to measure. The hectic daily routine of teaching often overtakes the need to step back and ask, "What are the important concepts for my students this year?" For example, a textbook may have in excess of 180 daily lessons for the year. The challenge is to locate and agree on 15 pivotal lessons. The others may set up, extend, connect, or address special techniques related to those lessons.

Too many teachers report that no adult has ever spent significant time in their classroom to observe and reflect with them on how they teach! If you are a principal, remember that your classroom observation is important to the teacher. Take it seriously as a colleague. Seek to learn the purpose of the lesson in the mathematics curriculum and look for evidence that students have picked it up. Observe and reflect on the teaching in relation to the plan and the students' responses to real-time assessments. Observe students' engagement and critical thinking on the mathematics that they are doing. Written reports may be required or have later value. However, less formal professional interaction about the students' learning and the teachers' methods can be the start of more substantive growth for both you and your teachers—as well as your students. Ω