



# ASCD 1984–2004

Defining Moments, Future Prospects

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## **ASCD MISSION STATEMENT**

ASCD, a diverse, international community of educators, forging covenants in teaching and learning for the success of all learners.



# ASCD 1984–2004

## DEFINING MOMENTS, FUTURE PROSPECTS

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# FOREWORD

It was in 1977, while I was a struggling principal in search for some information to share with my faculty about a pending curriculum change at the district level, that I first encountered ASCD. A neighboring principal shared a copy of *Educational Leadership*. I don't remember the content of that article, but I do remember the look in my colleague's eyes and excitement in her voice as she spoke of how she waited expectantly each month for the next copy of the journal. She also described the ASCD Annual Conference she had attended the previous spring and how, through ASCD, she had begun networking with fellow educators.

She ended by inviting me to attend the next ASCD state affiliate meeting. I did, and connected with other principals, teachers, professors and superintendents. The energy to support each other and create opportunity for all children to learn was addicting. I joined ASCD—to me, the most important professional educational association in the world.

I don't know that those who gave birth to ASCD in 1943 could have imagined the organization as it exists today. However, it's certain that the founders' commitment to democratic principles, their dedication to quality teaching and learning, and their recognition of the importance of the people involved in these endeavors were all the right ingredients to anchor the Association's start up. Those three commitments have become the non-negotiable standards driving ASCD's growth, mission, and success.

From the Association's very beginning, membership was open to all educators intent on improving teaching and learning. One's position, job title, and years of service did not matter at ASCD, and they do not matter still; everyone within ASCD is valued and



has a voice. Over the years, these voices has grown stronger and stronger, even as membership has grown to more than 150,000. This is further evidence of ASCD's deep commitment to both influence and equity in the field of education

In our world today, children are born free, but not wise. The purpose of education is to make free children wise. Yet, despite decades of educational policy reforms, large populations in our schools continue to underperform. Addressing the disparities in learning between children is a passionate pursuit of ASCD. It is not only the voices of educators that ASCD stands for, but also the voices of children who have had their dreams deferred through no fault of their own. At ASCD, the work to rectify this inequality goes on.

So as you read through the pages of this book, which serves as a follow up to the 1986 publication *ASCD in Retrospect* and outlines the recent history and stories of the Association, keep in mind that ASCD is not just about the world-class publications, products, and services; it's about the people who chose to belong and support the organization's mission, values, and work. From between the lines, you will begin to detect what I have come to call that invisible difference of ASCD. It is rooted in the respect, passion, commitment, and friendship found when high-energy, knowledgeable people gather around a set of clear goals for all our children.

There is no better work than helping all children achieve their dreams.

RAYMOND McNULTY  
ASCD PRESIDENT, 2003–04