



## The MindLadder® Program for School Leaders: Leadership and School Development

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Downloaded from [www.mindladder.com](http://www.mindladder.com)<sup>1</sup>

**Problem:** Viewed historically, schools in the United States have adapted to changing circumstances, but the discontinuities and increasing pace of change in the knowledge economy are putting schools to a test many are struggling or failing to pass. Recognizing the risk to communities everywhere, pressures have been mounting at the local, state and federal level to induce change in education through legislation, standards, accountability and rewards. Yet large numbers of students continue to leave school prepared neither for work nor for further learning.

School leaders labor under pressure to ensure services are delivered to students according to laws and regulations covering the wide range of general and special education needs. The complexity of schools and the unrelenting requirement to provide services under tight fiscal constraints make it complicated for leaders to discern how they can change their schools even in the face of the mounting evidence that it is essential for them to do so.

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**Solution:** The development of the MindLadder family of programs was undertaken in considerable measure to produce a coherent, systems-oriented capability for school leaders to align their settings with the learning needs of communities that commit to innovate to prosper in the knowledge economy. Unlike attempts to *induce change* in education through external means, MindLadder enables school leaders to *infuse change* using knowledge of how students acquire curricular content, develop proficiency with its use, and learn how to learn. MindLadder enables school leaders to produce change at the level where learning occurs. It is important to be specific about what MindLadder does and does not do:

**Here is what MindLadder *does not do*:** MindLadder does not replace the academic content curriculum, the objectives and standards, and the methods of assessing outcomes that have been adopted. Adjustments and new selections in these areas can be made at any time to reflect changing academic standards and the available evidence of how their achievement is best assessed.

**Here is what MindLadder *does do*:** MindLadder enables classroom teachers, school psychologists, clinicians, school leaders and parents to promote development of the processes of knowledge construction students need to acquire the identified content curriculum, reach the accepted objectives and standards, and demonstrate their knowledge and skill on the identified measures of performance and outcomes. For students with learning difficulties and special education needs, MindLadder provides effective response-to-intervention options and a way for schools to focus efforts on overcoming, bypassing, or limiting obstacles for all students to acquire 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and make inclusion work as required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Leading by purpose; managing by results:** In the United States, the experience with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, which emphasizes accountability, has revealed that a sizeable proportion of schools in many communities fail to achieve the adequate yearly progress ('AYP') required under the law. This is placing enormous strain on building principals and teachers who often have to fall back on models of instruction that already have failed.

To educators in this predicament, MindLadder offers a switch from models of instruction that emphasize the content dimension of schooling to models of learning that, *in addition*, emphasize the process dimension. The switch enables educators to implement learning-centered solutions to academic difficulties. Thus it provides principals and their staff a way to lead by their purpose – to prepare students successfully for life in the community – and manage by their results – the assessment of student achievement on accepted, valid measures of performance. NCLB has, in practice, moved many educators to lead by what they instead should manage by. MindLadder provides a way to untangle this collusion by giving school leaders and their staff a philosophy and a tool set to put learning-centered solutions into practice and see their mission through.

**The achievement of your vision is our mission:** The leadership program provides overviews, consultations and planning sessions for school leaders to establish the practical points of reference that are needed to apply advances from the cognitive and learning sciences in the classroom, in assessment, in parent education and in systems management while providing a supportive environment for stakeholders to contribute, learn and grow.

*Use the leadership program to articulate your vision for learning in the knowledge economy and develop a sound plan for its implementation*