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**Pioneer School District introduces Edge Foundation coaching to help students with ADHD and Adverse Childhood Experiences succeed**

Shelton, WA (Nov. 19, 2018): Pioneer Elementary and Pioneer Middle School for the first time are training staff to provide executive-style coaching to students with executive function challenges often experienced because of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or trauma, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and/or non-traditional learning styles.

The schools are using a coaching program designed and administered by the non-profit Edge Foundation, which has proven that providing personalized coaching to at-risk students helps them succeed and meet their potential. The foundation was founded by Neil Peterson, who has led public transportation agencies in Seattle, Oakland and Los Angeles and was founding chief executive of Flexcar, now known as Zipcar. He started the foundation after seeing how executives benefit from coaching. The foundation was established to test whether providing specialized, one-on-one coaching could turn around students who are at risk of dropping out of school due to adverse childhood experiences and executive-function challenges (such as ADHD) that inhibit social and emotional learning. The foundation's goal is to provide coaches to all 7- to 24-year-olds in the country.

"In schools throughout the United States, teachers and counselors work with a significant number of youth whose poor executive function skills inhibit their social and emotional learning. They're creative, disorganized, bright, forgetful, likely to be caught up in school disciplinary problems, and worry their parents day and night," Peterson said. "They have trouble making good decisions and lack the skills needed to succeed in school – the ability to plan, prioritize, initiate, stay on task, focus, follow up, and adjust to change."

In the school setting, these executive function challenges get in the way of student success. These students:

- Make bad decisions
- Are bright, but underachieve
- Work hard, but forget to turn in their homework
- Try to fit in, but are impulsive and disruptive
- Want to do their best, but don't possess the right executive function tools

- Are struggling at school, yet know that a diploma is critical to breaking the poverty cycle
- Are chronically absent or are at risk of dropping out of school and unlikely to go to college

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which include abuse, neglect, and family/household challenges, are common with nearly two-thirds of participants in a landmark study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente. More than one in five in the study reported three or more ACEs. The CDC also estimates that 5.2 million children in the United States have formal diagnoses of ADHD, one of the best-known barriers to social and emotional Learning. The National Health Interview Survey estimates that nearly 10 percent of school-aged children have ADHD. These numbers do not include those who are undiagnosed.

The Edge Foundation helps students succeed at school by training school personnel – teachers, para-professionals, security personnel, counselors and administrators - to provide one-on-one, weekly, 20- to 25-minute coaching to individual students.

“Edge coaches help students develop the executive function skills that allow them to make good decisions in school and in life,” Peterson said.

Edge Foundation coaches currently work in more than 30 schools in Washington State, California, New York, Washington, DC, and North Carolina.

The Pioneer School District is the sixth school district in Washington state to use Edge coaching. Other districts include Seattle, Tacoma, Highline, Yakima and Mount Adams.

Why has the Pioneer School District signed on with the Edge Foundation? Because Edge Foundation coaching works. A study by Wayne State University looked at Edge Foundation coaching methods involving students from 10 universities and community colleges. The study was the largest and most comprehensive study of ADHD coaching conducted to date. The research team determined that the Edge Coaching model was four times more effective than any other educational intervention in helping students improve executive functioning and related skills as measured by the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory. (LASSI; Weinstein and Palmer, 2002).

“Edge Foundation coaching not only helps individual students, but schools as well. Educators who are increasingly held accountable for student performance and outcomes recognize the importance of executive functioning skills and other social and emotional learning strategies,” Peterson said. The standards movement requires schools, individual teachers, and curriculums to produce results, close performance gaps, boost achievement and reduce drop-outs - with particular attention paid to subgroups such as special education, poor and minorities.

Helping students improve their executive function skills helps schools succeed. Students who don't get help with these challenges make it difficult for schools to meet their goals because

these students not only underachieve, but also tend to disrupt other students' learning due to their poor impulse control and frustration.

"We're excited to see the Pioneer School District school join our Edge program," Peterson said. "With Edge Coaching training, the students, staff, school and community will benefit."

**About the Edge Foundation:** The Edge Foundation aims to give each student a coach so they can complete their education, realize their full potential and pursue their passion. The foundation focuses on teens and adults who are at risk of dropping out of school - non-traditional learners with executive function challenges that can come from ADHD and adverse childhood experiences. Learn more at [www.edgefoundation.org](http://www.edgefoundation.org).