Rethinking adult learning is essential to the redesign of learning for children.

Learning Forward is facilitating a diverse group of leading thinkers, designers, and practitioners called the PD Brain Trust to inspire new thinking and generate new expertise about how to create demand for — and deliver — redesigned systems of support that guarantee all educators have access to effective professional learning.

The PD Brain Trust is a collaborative professional learning community, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, of individuals from organizations that have demonstrated leadership in all aspects of K-12 education.

PD Brain Trust partners:

- **Contribute to a professional learning community** where partners learn from each other and from leaders in other fields that focus on changing human behavior;
- **Commit to openly share their own challenges** in the creation and support of professional learning systems;
- **Co-create new designs and solutions for professional learning systems** that can achieve new outcomes for individual learners, participating organizations, and networks of partners across the K-12 continuum; and
- **Design a strategy to advance professional learning redesign** and move people and organizations toward new practices and behaviors in the field.

PD Brain Trust partners first met in November 2014 in partnership with the Long Beach Unified School District, a national leader in the creation of professional learning practices that have led to significant improvements in student learning. In March, the group met in Cary, North Carolina, in partnership with SAS, IDEO, and the Wake County Public School System, a leader in personalized learning for educators.

The next meeting is scheduled for June in partnership with the Florida State Department of Education, a national leader in developing a state system of professional learning.

**PD BRAIN TRUST PARTNERS**

Members of the PD Brain Trust are among the field’s leading thinkers, designers, and practitioners. They represent advocacy and research organizations, educator associations, foundations, school systems, higher education institutions, and state and provincial education agencies.

- **Roderick Allen**, British Columbia Ministry of Education
- **Barnett Berry**, Center for Teaching Quality
- **Catherine Brown**, Center for American Progress
- **Karen Cator**, Digital Promise
- **Timothy Daly**, TNTP
- **Jennifer Davis**, National Center on Time & Learning
- **Dan Domenech**, American Association of School Administrators
- **Segun Eubanks**, National Education Association
- **Stephen Fink**, University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership
- **Crystal Gonzales**, Helmsley Charitable Trust
- **Tabitha Grossman**, Hope Street Group
- **Tomeka Hart**, Southern Education Foundation
- **Bryan Hassel**, Public Impact
- **Anthony Jackson**, Asia Society
- **Susan Moxley**, Lake County Schools
- **William Olsen**, University of Chicago Urban Education Institute
- **Donald Pemberton**, University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning
- **Rosita Ramirez**, NALEO Educational Fund
- **Wendy Robinson**, Fort Wayne Community Schools
- **David Silver**, RTI International
- **Marla Ucelli-Kashyap**, American Federation of Teachers
- **Kate Walsh**, National Council on Teacher Quality
- **Michael Watson**, Delaware Department of Education
Over the past year, I started a new coaching relationship with an administrator. Walking through the leader’s school, I was transported back to eight years ago, when I was the new principal at a high-performing high school. It didn’t take long to see I had a journey ahead of me.

Within weeks, I knew that I was leading a school that had great results — for most students. We had many skilled faculty members, but they didn’t always see why we’d need to change. While I could set up a schedule that put every teacher into a team, could we really advance our school to excellence?

Looking back on that journey, I’d like to share a few lessons I learned along the way.

**DIG DEEP INTO YOUR DATA.**

When the faculty in my school were complacent about change, it was time to learn about the students we were leaving behind.

By looking not just at the state or systemwide data but also what we could learn from homework and teacher-developed tests, we learned that students in a range of subgroups weren’t proficient. Because those subgroups were small, our scores overall looked fine. But attaching names to the data helped the faculty realize that settling for fine was not an option.

Every student had the right to strong teaching, and now we could figure out how to make that happen.

**BUILD CAPACITY OF YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM.**

I quickly realized that if we were going to ask teams of teachers to, for example, become masterful at using data, I would need the help of a schoolwide leadership team. The 20-plus members of my instructional leadership team included assistant principals, department chairs, school librarians and technologists, an instructional coach, and directors of student services and activities.

In our work as a learning community, we strengthened our abilities to lead collaboration, facilitate teams, focus on cultural proficiency, and so much more. Without the commitment of this team, there is no way we could transform culture or skills schoolwide.

**USE RESOURCES CREATIVELY.**

Every school or system leader has a unique set of resource constraints and opportunities. While I didn’t have Title I funds to draw on, I did have an instructional fund that most principals would assume would be best spent on textbooks.

What if I didn’t need textbooks?

Instead, we bought what we needed — for example, we found that using those funds to hire an assistant principal dedicated to instructional improvement would propel us forward. I also relied on parents and community members to support our learning. Some parents supported learning teams through refreshments and snacks, while community partners gave us offsite learning locations to help the leadership team look at our solutions in new ways.

**INVEST IN YOURSELF.**

I wouldn’t have helped my school succeed if I hadn’t made my own learning a priority. By my second year in the job, I knew I needed more knowledge and skills, support, and a network of smart peers. That’s just what I found with the Learning Forward Academy. I’m a proud graduate of the Learning Forward Academy Class of 2011. If I hadn’t invested in my learning, I also wouldn’t be the president of Learning Forward.

I can’t wait to help my coaching colleague along the learning journey. We all have many more lessons to learn.
Learning Forward affiliates

Affiliates offer members the opportunity to expand their professional development networks by connecting with other individuals by location. More than 35 state and provincial affiliates provide services and programs that connect staff developers within individual states or provinces or regions. Contact Learning Forward Deputy Executive Director Frederick Brown (frederick.brown@learningforward.org) if you’re interested in facilitating a new affiliate in a state currently not served by a state chapter.

TOP 10 REASONS TO FORM OR JOIN AN AFFILIATE:

1. Gain access to the most up-to-date information on professional learning.
2. Grow professionally through educational program offerings.
3. Promote a greater appreciation for the impact of educator learning on student learning.
4. Strengthen professional learning so that teaching, leadership, and student success improve.
5. Make a difference in your own school, district, and state or province.
6. Influence state/provincial and school system policies and practices related to professional learning.
7. Network and form relationships with other professionals as part of a learning community.
8. Grow as a leader and offer your own leadership skills.
9. Foster and maintain a code of ethics for practice.
10. Be affiliated with an organization that is recognized internationally as the premier voice for professional learning.
Action alert on ESEA

Thank you to all who responded to Learning Forward’s action alert last month. Congress is at work this year to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Many came forward to sign Learning Forward’s petition encouraging policymakers to be sure the law includes funds focused solely on effective professional learning.

Learning Forward’s advocacy efforts related to ESEA reauthorization will continue in the upcoming weeks, though it is difficult to predict the precise path this process will follow. As in past years, Learning Forward will encourage lawmakers to include at least elements of Learning Forward’s definition of professional learning in the legislation.

In the meantime, watch for any additional action alerts and see related resources at www.learningforward.org/get-involved/advocacy, including an archived webinar describing Learning Forward’s recent related advocacy efforts.

SPRING WEBINAR SERIES CONTINUES

Join authors and leaders in the field for webinars on key topics that will prepare teacher, school, and system leaders to successfully implement professional learning that increases teaching effectiveness and student achievement.

Webinars are free for Learning Forward members. Nonmembers may attend one webinar for $20 or three for $50. Members also get access to the complete webinar archive and can participate in facilitated online discussions and other activities following each webinar on the Learning Exchange.

Upcoming webinars include:

- April 30: Jan Chappuis, Assessment for Learning
- May 14: Alan Blankstein and Pedro Noguera, Courageous Leadership
- May 21: Gayle Gregory, Data-Driven Differentiation

Learn more and register at www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

May 15: Manuscript deadline for the December 2015 issue of JSD. Theme: Professional learning for literacy.

May 31: Last day to save $75 on registration for the 2015 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

June 1-3: PD Brain Trust meets in partnership with Florida State Department of Education.

July 16-19: Learning Forward Summer Institute, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Oct. 6-7: Learning Forward Fall Institute, Princeton, New Jersey.

Dec. 5-9: 2015 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.