

## Learning Forward welcomes Academy Class of 2017

The Learning Forward Academy Class of 2017 brings together 51 like-minded education professionals for a 2½-year, coach-led, collaborative learning cohort to tackle their biggest challenges in advancing teaching and learning in their systems.

The Academy is a guided learning and problem-solving experience based on what we know about the causal relationships between professional learning, educator effectiveness, and student results.

What is it that participants like most about their Academy experience?

- Connecting with, learning from, and gaining the perspectives of people across the country;

- Gaining new knowledge, tools, and resources to support professional learning;
- Focused collaboration time;
- Getting to know the coaches and learning from them; and
- Working with others in job-alike groups.

Class of 2017 members will experience 12 face-to-face, team-based learning days, attend Learning Forward's 2015 and 2016 Annual Conferences, and collaborate throughout the year by phone and virtually. An experienced coach will provide ongoing support.

For more information about the Academy, visit [www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/academy](http://www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/academy).

### ACADEMY CLASS OF 2017

*Here are the members of Learning Forward's Academy Class of 2017, under the coaching direction of Nikki Mouton and Adrienne Tedesco.*

- **Jason Adams**, principal/director of elementary literacy, Missouri
- **Teresa Anderson**, principal, Illinois
- **Carolyn Anderson**, principal, South Carolina
- **Tanya Batzel**, coordinator of professional learning, Colorado
- **Shannon Black**, director of talent management, Tennessee
- **Glenn Borthistle**, superintendent, Canada
- **Ankhe Bradley**, assistant superintendent, Illinois
- **Jeff Brewster**, director of human resources development, Wyoming
- **Susan Carmody**, principal, Arizona
- **Carmen Concepcion**, instructional supervisor, Florida
- **Debbie Cook**, professional development director, Alabama
- **Angela Crawford**, director of special education, Georgia
- **Jennifer Dalrymple**, professional development coordinator, Illinois
- **Calandra Davis**, principal, South Carolina
- **Lizzette Farsinejad**, Title III education specialist, Alabama
- **David Fayad**, director of learning, Columbia
- **Rebecca Few**, instructional coach, Tennessee
- **Marie Gagliano**, teacher, New Jersey
- **Anthony Gill**, principal, New York
- **Erin Herbruck**, director of professional learning, Ohio
- **Theodore Hickman**, assistant superintendent for schools, Illinois
- **Stacey Hicks**, SEED project director, Arizona
- **Elizabeth Hodge**, director of professional learning, North Carolina
- **Leslie Holtcamp**, director of professional development, Texas
- **Ellen Hopkins**, TPL coordinator, Washington
- **Emily Horne**, instructional technology resource teacher, Virginia
- **Terri Jenkins**, director, Georgia
- **Donna Ledford**, principal, Georgia
- **Malissa Martin**, instructional literacy coach, Texas
- **Melissa Michael McClelland**, instructional coach, Georgia
- **Cathy Moore**, deputy superintendent for academic advancement, North Carolina
- **Beth Mulvey**, director of curriculum & instruction, Missouri
- **Susan Ormbrek**, teacher evaluation, Washington
- **Kelly Ott**, director of professional learning, Kansas
- **Leslie Owens**, special education program coordinator, Illinois
- **Monica Peavy**, director of professional development operations, New York
- **Courtney Rattenbury**, assistant principal, New York
- **Sue Renehan**, education specialist, Connecticut
- **Mark Savage**, principal, North Carolina
- **Joe Schroeder**, associate executive director, Wisconsin
- **Terri Seay**, instructional coach, Georgia
- **Tammy Snively**, professional learning coordinator, Texas
- **Beth Spears**, director of staff development & student achievement, Oklahoma
- **Ruth Steidinger**, senior director of academic programs & support, North Carolina
- **Molly Stovall**, director of English learner services, Tennessee
- **Janis Streich**, director of growth & innovation, Virginia
- **Ashleigh Van Thiel**, director of talent development, Illinois
- **Andrew Ward**, master teacher project director, Arizona
- **Kelly Wessel**, curriculum coordinator, Kansas
- **Audra Wheeler**, program specialist of professional learning, Georgia
- **Rhonda Willis**, curriculum coordinator, South Carolina



## Collaboration aligns a vision for success

Educators in successful schools and districts have found that implementing professional learning communities at the school level can be effective for sharing vision, beliefs, and strategies that align with their system's overall strategic plans. I work in Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools, where professional learning communities have become the norm as a model of a changed culture and shared vision. As Frances Ivey, assistant superintendent at Fairfax County Public Schools, notes, "Our emphasis on professional learning communities has emphasized the need to work collaboratively, study the data, and focus on each child, by name and by need."

For a professional learning community to take hold across an organization and become self-sustaining, it must be part of a shared vision and leadership model. Parents, teachers, staff, students, and the leadership team within and across all levels, roles, and functions must set goals and feel personally responsible for its success and failure, as well as enabled and empowered to demonstrate leadership skills as needed.

I remember when I first realized the importance of shared vision. I was participating in professional learning on collaborative leadership and professional learning communities. The

**Deborah Jackson is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.**

### on board DEBORAH JACKSON

speaker opened with an illustration showing that just because the captain of a ship can clearly see the destination, that doesn't help at all if the crew paddles in a different direction.

As a high school and middle school principal, I found that professional learning communities were critical to student academic success. However, I knew we could go further and that it would take even deeper collaboration.

Our greatest success in achievement came when our system reorganized into regions. Within each region, schools are clustered into pyramids of feeder schools — one high school, one middle school, and several elementary schools. Fairfax County Public Schools is the 10th largest school system in the U.S., with many students who are at risk, English language learners, receive special education, or eligible for free or reduced meals. The district's five regions are each headed by a regional assistant superintendent.

Administrators meet monthly to offer collegial support, engage in conversations on teaching and learning, and collaborate on strategies and best practices to affirm individual school, pyramid, and district goals. Principals develop goals and identify the resources they need.

Data are critical throughout the system. Ivey says, "Each pyramid

develops goals based on achievement data and other important data. Most goals focus on literacy and numeracy, although pyramids have also developed goals around writing, anti-bullying, wellness and resiliency, and student and parent engagement."

Without careful planning within each pyramid, our successes could be hit or miss. Assistant superintendent Angela Atwater notes that the various schools in the pyramids develop goals that are aligned. She says that through



their aligned professional learning, teachers can make sure that when "children matriculate from elementary to middle, and middle to high, they will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful students."

The district has defined a culture of high expectations for all through its vision, shared leadership, and practices such as professional learning communities at each level that demonstrate high expectations. With everyone paddling in the same direction, I know we'll reach our destination: Success for every student in the system. ■



THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

**LEARNING FORWARD'S VISION:**  
Excellent teaching and learning every day.

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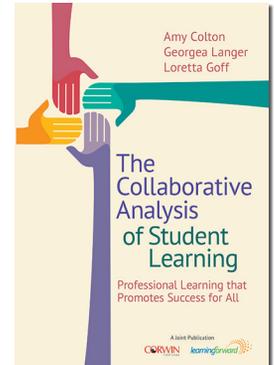
THE COLLABORATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENT LEARNING:

Professional Learning That Promotes Success for All  
*By Amy Colton, Georgea Langer, and Loretta Goff*

This book is a comprehensive guide to implementing a research-based approach to professional learning that drives educator effectiveness and promotes learning for every student.

Aligned with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, the Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning (CASL) model has been directly linked to student improvement. The book includes step-by-step guidance to implementation supported by tools, protocols, and examples.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, Learning Forward members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for \$69 (for U.S. mailing addresses). To receive this book, add the Book Club to your membership before July 15. For more information about this or any membership package, call **800-727-7288** or email **office@learningforward.org**.



**LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR**

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

**Oct. 1:** Last day to save \$50 on registration to Learning Forward's 2015 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

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

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

## Have you adopted the standards?

Learning Forward works with state and provincial affiliates to track which states or provinces have adopted or adapted the Standards for Professional Learning. See the latest information about standards adoption at **www.learningforward.org/who-we-are/our-impact**.

In addition, Learning Forward would like to hear about schools, districts, or organizations that have adopted the standards to guide their work. We want to know:

- Who has adopted the standards?
- Why was it important to adopt the standards?
- Has the adoption of standards influenced changes in beliefs, missions, or visions in organizations? If so, how?
- Has the adoption of standards influenced changes in practice? If so, how?
- What support does the school or district offer educators to implement the standards?

Learning Forward is also interested in hearing answers to these questions from educators in states that have adopted the standards.

Please contact Tracy Crow (**tracy.crow@learningforward.org**) if you have information related to standards adoption.