



Giving Thanks

Learning Forward Foundation Awardees Share Their Stories



In this season of gratitude, the Learning Forward Foundation would like to celebrate by sharing our thanks with you. We thank these Foundation Awardees for making the lives of students and educators brighter with their gifts of passion, creativity, and empathy. This is just a few of the stories from our fearless lead learners....we hope you join us in giving thanks for their collective brilliance. Thank you, Learning Forward Family!

Shannon Terry, Patsy Hochman Academy Scholarship, 2016

The Learning Forward Foundation grant offered me the opportunity to serve as an extension of a passionate group of individuals who share my same level of high conviction and advocacy around the power of learning as an agent for transformation (individual, institutional and societal transformation). As one of millions of benefactors of the LFF's work, beginning from my time as a classroom teacher and continuing in my current role as director of professional learning, I have looked to the Learning Forward Foundation's vision, mission, beliefs and goals to identify and actualize levers for improving educational systems leading to small and large scale improvements.

And, as I reflect on my reasons for applying for the LFF grant, I remember being compelled to submit an application believing that by being affiliated with the foundation, even in some small measure such as the grant, I would be able to accelerate my ability, my team's ability and our collective abilities, to advance equity leveraging learning as the primary vehicle for bringing about social justice. At the time of application and certainly now, I can think of nothing more important than energizing people around learning, especially when you consider our current national landscape.

Thankful



Newark, Learning Forward Team Grant, 2015

The Learning Forward Team Grant awarded us the opportunity to further develop ourselves as individual educators and as a teaching team. Consequently, our special education students experienced an unprecedented amount of success in a variety of areas including socio-emotional, academic, behavioral, and speech development.

Tom Schmidt, Bismarck Legacy High School, Professional Learning Innovation Think Tank Challenge, 2017

Having the ability to collaborate with professionals from around the globe has been instrumental in getting the students of legacy high school opportunities for 21st century education. After every conference call or webinar we feel even more excited and thankful for this possibility.

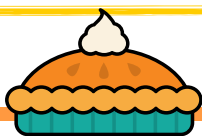
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- Darlene Miller, Principal as Leader of Professional Learning Grant, 2013
- As a recipient of the Learning Forward's The Principal as a Leader of Professional Learning scholarship and through my work sessions with the foundation's representatives and my executive coach, I understood the critical importance of ongoing, focused professional learning opportunities. My action plan provided my teachers with differentiated, connected, professional learning opportunities that have further developed teachers' skills and greatly impacted student learning. The year following our work with Learning Forward, our school earned an award from our district as a reward school based upon the improved growth and achievement of our students. I credit our focused, driven efforts to grow our teachers through differentiated professional learning as a major factor in our receiving this award.



Sarah Diggs, Learning Forward Foundation System Grant, 2016

The System Grant provides our professional learning leadership team with sacred space and time to engage as learning leaders in our district. The coaching we receive pushes our thinking and supports collaborative action across our system.

Anna Jackson, Learning Forward Foundation Academy Scholarship, 2016

As a recipient of the Learning Forward Foundation Academy Scholarship, I have been so blessed to participate in the Learning Forward Academy. It has been an exciting experience to learn with educators from across the country as we identify authentic problems of practice and utilize inquiry-based learning to bring about significant change through professional learning. One of my greatest challenges as a leader of professional learning is having the ability to assess the impact of our work. The Academy has provided me with new tools and frameworks to use in measuring success. As we pause to give thanks at this time of year, I add the scholarship & Academy to my gratitude list.

Ronni Edwards, Learning Forward Foundation Academy Scholarship, 2017

In the short time I have been working with the Learning Forward Academy, I have been able to make valuable connections to other incredible educational leaders from across the nation who are immersed in the work of school improvement. They have encouraged and inspired my work as I begin the Academy journey. The insight and learning has provided essential support for job-embedded professional learning on my campus as we begin to implement lab classrooms to improve instructional practice.



Susan O'Neil, Worcester, MA Learning Forward Foundation Team Grant, 2014

The experiences and financial support the 2014 Learning Forward Foundation Team Grant supporting "excellent teaching and learning every day" afforded Worcester Arts Magnet School, Worcester Public Schools was greatly appreciated and continues to have a positive impact! The Learning Forward Foundation Team Grant planted the seed and supported the initial growth. The number of teachers involved continues to increase. They work together and continue to develop, refine and share their practices based in the original proposal. Long term, sustained improvement was given seed money and support through the team grant. The regular check-ins with the foundation structured and supported reflection and ongoing planning. Teachers and principals have been empowered. They have been able to build from the initial structure and keep the initiative going.

Juan Guitierrez, Patrick Henry School, Professional Learning Think Tank Challenge, 2017

The Learning Forward Foundation Grant has given us an opportunity to collaborate, reflect and define a clearer path for full scale implementation of our 'Personalized Learning' innovation work. The team has a better idea where to go slow before we can go fast.



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Shannon Bogle, Learning Forward Foundation Academy Scholarship, 2017

The opportunity to be a part of the Learning Forward Academy Class of 2019 has provided me with opportunities to focus on teacher leadership in my district. The practice of digging into data, connecting with colleagues, and problem solving has provided me with new perspectives on supporting teacher growth at school sites.



Andrea Von Biberstein, Learning Forward Foundation Academy Scholarship, 2016 and Learning Forward Foundation Team Grant, 2010

The Learning Forward Academy experience developed the skills to craft, execute, and evaluate a plan that put teacher-led job-embedded professional learning into focus at my school. The award gave our school's work instant credibility and developed the confidence to move our school's personalized learning initiative forward. Through the LF Academy and the Foundation's follow-up coaching calls, I gained a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the school change process and grew professionally.



Kathleen O'Flynn, Learning Forward Foundation Team Grant, 2016

When you know your 'why' then your 'what' has more impact, because you're working towards your purpose.



John Willis, Learning Forward Foundation (Chidley) Academy Scholarship, 2014

Receiving the Chidley Scholarship afforded me the opportunity for a very high level of one on one coaching. My coach helped me, above all else, to ensure my problem of practice has a bottom line focus on increasing student achievement.

TAMMY BOSLEY, PRINCIPAL AS LEADER OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, 2015
FLEXIBLE PROTOCOLS WITH CONTINUOUS SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR ON-GOING LEARNING, BRINGS EVERYONE CLOSER TO THE SHARED VISION TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.



Chad Dumas, Learning Forward Foundation Affiliate Grant, 2016

Our experience with the grant is that it has accelerated our work throughout the state to better understand the Standards of Professional Learning, and advocate for their support and implementation.

Suzanne Newell, Patsy Hochman Academy Scholarship, 2014

My participation in the Learning Forward Academy, which was funded by a Learning Forward Foundation Grant, has had an enormous impact on my school district. My problem of practice that was studied during my 3 years in Academy has become a major, district-wide initiative that has impacted every classroom in our district in some fashion. I'm incredibly grateful for the sponsorship and the catalyst for learning and leadership that Learning Forward provided.