

theme / BUILDING SUPPORT

**Tarnished brand could use polish:** *A more vocal advocacy on several fronts can restore professional learning's image.*

Branding, along with improved quality, helps a product or service win support and build positive associations. Educators need to pay attention to the professional development brand in order to emphasize the importance and value of their learning.

*By Hayes Mizell*

**When policy joins practice:** *Task force examines how states and unions address professional development.*

Several national organizations partnered to determine how best to leverage state and local policies in strengthening professional learning. A careful examination of state and local policy language revealed key insights about the relationship between policies and professional learning and resulted in several recommendations for states and districts.

*By Joellen Killion and Linda Davin*

**Ambassadors of learning:** *Teachers' enthusiasm builds momentum for district's long-running program.*

More than 15 years ago, high school educators in Holt, Mich., crafted and gathered strong support for a plan that allowed them time each week for collaborative, job-embedded learning. Since then, the entire district has embraced the concept and strived to use that time for continuous learning.

*By Valerie von Frank*



Photo by VALERIE VON FRANK

**Learning walks build hearty appetites for professional development.**

When teachers in a Rhode Island middle school took the opportunity to visit each others' classrooms using a structured protocol, they understood the learning benefits of a more collaborative working environment. The school's principal led the way, resulting in impressive gains for students.

*By Julia Steiny*

**Forging a national strategy for success:** *NSDC's Policy Maker of the Year describes challenges.* Accepting NSDC's first Policy Maker of the Year Award, Rhode Island Sen. Jack Reed shared his perspective on the importance of high-quality professional development. His remarks at NSDC's 40th Annual Conference showcase the work federal policy makers do to further NSDC's purpose.

## features

**State of the profession:** *Study measures status of professional development.*

Through a thorough review of research, an NSDC-commissioned study outlines elements of effective professional learning. The report also finds that teachers in the U.S. fall behind their international counterparts in terms of access to high-quality learning opportunities.

*By Linda Darling-Hammond, Ruth Chung Wei, Alethea Andree, Nikole Richardson, and Stelios Orphanos*

**We must strip away layers of inequality:** *A leading voice in education policy addresses the present and future of U.S. schools. Q&A with Linda Darling-Hammond.*

The lead author of NSDC's research study shares insights about the greatest challenges educators face, how teachers can work to address student achievement gaps, and why high-quality professional learning isn't the norm for educators.

