



## NSDC is Learning Forward

**W**e have a new name. Our commitment to ensure that every educator engages in effective professional development every day so every student achieves is stronger than ever. We invite every member to join in this effort.

Our new name symbolizes what we stand for. Learning is first in the name because it is what we advocate. We are committed to educator learning as a primary means of ensuring educator quality and student success. Forward symbolizes our future focus. The learning students experience today impacts their future. A recent economic analysis, not yet peer reviewed (Leonhardt, 2010), concludes that, as adults, a class of kindergartners with an effective teacher makes

approximately \$320,000 more over the course of their careers than adults from a kindergarten class with a less effective teacher. This study is one of many that confirms the importance of effective teaching as a significant factor in improving student achievement. Learning that educators experience today influences the

quality of their practice and their impact on students. That, in turn, influences students' quality of life and economic, civic, and physical well-being.

For the past 41 years, our name has served us well. Today, though, we are so much more than our name indicates. We are an international association of learning educators. We focus on professional development, or learning. We are a professional association committed to advocacy, research, and practice.

Learning Forward stands for the link between educator learning and student achievement. Learning Forward intends to energize and engage our members and others to advocate for local, state, provincial, and federal policies, practices, and support systems that ensure collaborative, school-based, daily professional learning guided by a well-prepared facilitator who is frequently a teacher leader. Learning Forward calls for research that examines the link between professional learning, educator practice, and student achievement to inform policy, funding priority, and practice. Merging the words learning and forward in the logo serves as another reminder of the importance of community, collaboration, and common goals.

### TEACHER LEADER TITLES

Teacher leaders within schools know about the name game. We

For more information about our name change visit [www.learningforward.org/about/newname.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/about/newname.cfm).

have collected a list of role titles during the time we've committed to serving teachers in leadership roles. The extensive list contains the various names for a teacher who serves other teachers by facilitating, guiding, supporting and providing effective professional learning that strengthens teaching and increases student achievement. The variation in names or titles causes confusion when attempting to refer to teacher leaders as a group. The distinctions are helpful, though, when seeking to define with precision the many different teacher-leader role configurations. Sometimes the confusion is exacerbated, especially when a teacher leader serving in one capacity in one school or school district is called by one name and another doing the same work in a different school or district is called by a different name.

Names matter. In the business world, company names convey powerful messages. Some refer to this message as the brand of a company. The name of a trusted company speaks of the company's integrity and commitment to customers. Our new name, too, carries a powerful message. Our members and the public can depend on us for the same great service, commitment to disseminating



cutting edge practice and information, advocacy for policies to enhance effective practices, and a renewed effort to ensure professional learning for student success.

**ACTIONS TO TAKE**

Now that NSDC is Learning Forward, teacher leaders who are members can be proud that their professional association continues to examine how to convey its core message through its brand. They might use this opportunity to examine and recommit to the primary purpose of their leadership — increasing student achievement. There are a number of possible actions for teacher leaders to take.

- They might talk with their school and district administrators about the name change and what it stands for.
- Together they could explore the school’s or district’s belief about

the role of professional learning in student achievement.

- Teacher leaders might encourage others to join together with the nearly 13,000 members of Learning Forward who are committed to ensuring that professional learning is a vital part of educators’ workdays.
- They might embed Learning Forward’s core message in their own work by reminding their colleagues, supervisors, and community members that learning is at the heart of any change.
- Teacher leaders might commit to their own professional learning to refine and expand their own practice so that it enriches the practice of others.


Even the new logo exemplifies the essence of Learning Forward’s brand. The letters leaning forward convey the importance of looking beyond the present to the future each educator

is creating today. The cluster of dots represents the community of adults and students reaching into the future. Combining the words in the logo depict collaboration.

We celebrate with every teacher leader another new beginning as we launch our new name and look forward to serving each one as the professional association committed to learning forward.

**REFERENCE**

**Leonhardt, David (July 27, 2010).** The case for \$320,000 kindergarten teachers. *The New York Times*. Available at [www.nytimes.com/2010/07/28/business/economy/28leonhardt.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/28/business/economy/28leonhardt.html).

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