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The Learning Forward Journal

A national border doesn't have to stand in the way of a good idea

International comparisons in education have come in waves over the last several decades. As early as 1957, U.S. educators undertook reforms in mathematics and science curricula when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, creating fears that the U.S. was lagging in the space race. The 1983 landmark report *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) included recommendations to counter the increasing sense that the nation's standing was in decline relative to the rest of the world due in part to failings of our education system. In their research, the authors of *A Nation at Risk* looked to data from other countries to consider what practices might be helping other nations excel in education.

Recently, more educators have turned to international benchmarking studies and comparisons with a genuine eagerness to learn about strategies that have proven successful in other contexts. Those educators not only consider what they might learn from teachers and leaders in other countries but also explore the cultural, social, and economic contexts in which schools operate. A practice in one country might not make sense in another, many realize, yet a national border doesn't

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stand in the way of a good idea. Curious educators are more open than ever to the world of possibilities available to them. Technology, networks of like-minded educators, and social media make global exploration a breeze.

When Learning Forward (then NSDC) undertook the Status of Professional Learning research project in 2008, it was a given that we couldn't understand the state of the field without looking at the role of professional learning in other nations. That report, along with other data, helped to crystalize the belief that a sustained investment in job-embedded professional learning is no longer optional as school systems strive for high performance. International perspectives were also critical in shaping the 2011 Standards for Professional Learning. We understand the need to not only learn with our colleagues around the world but also to extend our reach as we influence the future of professional learning and understand its evolution and impact.

This issue of *JSD* explores professional learning practices around the world with the hope that readers will make new connections in new corners.

Start with Lois Brown Easton's overview on p. 10 to get a big-picture sense of what professional learning looks like in several other countries. In my interview with Kristen Weatherby on p. 22, you'll learn about the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the organization behind PISA and a key player in understanding international practices.

It's no surprise that there are a lot of smart, high-achieving educators out there doing great work, and they're not all in the United States. The more we take advantage of the opportunity to learn alongside those who have very different perspectives and experiences, the more effectively we are engaging in the kind of collaboration that can transform teaching and learning. I invite submissions from all over — I'd love to showcase international colleagues in every issue.

REFERENCE

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essentials

REMOVING ROADBLOCKS
Remodeling Literacy Learning: Making Room for What Works
National Center for Literacy Education, 2013

This report, based on survey responses from more than 2,400 educators, investigates the connection between professional learning, teacher collaboration, and student learning. According to the report, principals play a vital role in actively modeling collaboration, a factor that was strongly correlated with higher levels of trust in a school and more rapid spread of best practices. The survey found that there are many structures in place in schools that can be leveraged to support teacher collaboration despite the fact that schools don't dedicate sufficient time for this purpose. The report outlines steps federal and state policymakers and system and school leaders can take to eliminate roadblocks to literacy learning in the content areas. Many of the specific recommendations are in direct alignment with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.
www.literacyinlearningexchange. org/remodeling

GLOBAL NEWS FEED
International Ed News
Teachers College, Columbia University

International Ed News, a project of the National Center for Restructuring Education Schools and Teaching at Teachers College, provides access to news, research, and reports that discuss what's new, what's good, and what's effective from prekindergarten through secondary education around the world. A Twitter feed provides links to articles from the popular press as well as reports and evaluations from academics, foundations, think tanks, government agencies, and others. Web posts provide periodic summaries and scans of the issues that are arising and trending in different parts of the world.
http://internationalednews.com

BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM
Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A Blueprint for Action
NSW Government, March 2013

A panel of experts from New South Wales, Australia, created this blueprint, which includes a set of 16 reforms spanning a teacher's career cycle. The blueprint looks at reforms to initial teacher training and induction for beginning teachers, through to how to best recognize and value experienced teachers and support potential school leaders. The proposed reforms are divided into four categories: initial teacher education, entry into the profession, develop and maintain professional practice, and recognize and share outstanding practice.
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ news/greatteaching/index. php

FEEDBACK WANTED
Towards a Royal College of Teaching: Raising the Status of the Profession
The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 2013

Described in the foreword as "an exploration of the challenges and opportunities setting up a Royal College of Teaching could present," this report explores the various potential roles of a "member-driven independent professional body" in England. Included are essays from a wide range of contributors, include teachers unions, primary school teachers, teaching leaders, and those involved in continuing professional development. The collaborative project seeks feedback from teachers.
www.teacherdevelopmenttrust.org/rcot

COMPENSATION AND CAREERS
Restructuring Compensation and Career Paths
Education Resource Strategies, May 2013

Education Resource Strategies publishes a monthly e-newsletter highlighting tools and information to help move educators toward a new vision of teaching. This issue focuses on the results of recent research, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on the possibilities for redesigning teacher compensation and professional development. Included are tools designed to help jump-start conversations about compensation and career paths that reward high-quality teaching and offer teachers opportunities to advance without leaving the classroom.

www.erstrategies.org/news/restructuring_compensation_and_career_paths

JOIN THE CONVERSATION
The Future of Education

The Future of Education is an interview series and discussion community offering a social network for those who care about education to share their voices and ideas with others. Sign up to receive notifications of live interviews hosted by Steve Hargadon, director of Web 2.0 Labs and chair of the Social Learning Summit. Archives of recorded interviews include Andreas Schleicher on what we can learn about education from international data and Pasi Sahlberg and Vivien Stewart on learning from success stories around the world.

www.futureofeducation.com

TEACHER VOICES
Teacher Self-Efficacy, Voice and Leadership: Towards a Policy Framework for Education International
Education International Research Institute, 2012

The Education International Research Institute, a global federation of teacher unions, commissioned an international survey of teachers and teacher union officials to produce data about opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership, influence policy, shape professional practice, and build professional knowledge. The report summarizes teachers' responses, examines the role of unions in teacher development, and offers policy recommendations to give teachers a greater voice in influencing policy and practice.

http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/teacher_self-efficacy_voice_leadership.pdf

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TRENDS AROUND THE WORLD

In "A global perspective" (p. 10), author Lois Brown Easton outlines key characteristics of professional learning in seven countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada (Alberta), Chile, Korea, Japan, and Poland. Use this note-taking guide as you read the country profiles.

Country	Similarities to my context	Differences from my context	Compelling fact	Idea worth exploring
Australia (p. 16)				
Brazil (p. 16)				
Canada (Alberta) (p. 18)				
Chile (p. 18)				
Korea (p. 20)				
Japan (p. 20)				
Poland (p. 11)				

IN THIS ISSUE OF *JSD* **THE LEARNING STARTS HERE** ▼

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QUOTABLE

Leaders adopt a global view

"The government is developing us as international leaders. Australia has been isolated, very parochial. We have had very egocentric ways. Now we're being encouraged to reach out, look at things globally."

— *Wilma Culton, principal of Serpell Primary School in Australia.*

Read more about Victoria's blueprint for improving education in "Victoria's leading edge" on p. 32.

HOW COUNTRIES FARED

I n the report *How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better,* McKinsey & Company analyzed 20 systems from around the world, all with improving but differing levels of performance, examining how each has achieved significant, sustained, and widespread gains in student outcomes, as measured by international and national assessments.

Based on interviews with stakeholders and analysis of interventions carried out by these systems, the report identifies the reform elements that are replicable for school systems elsewhere as they move from poor to fair to good to great to excellent performance.

Here are some of the findings from the report.

REFORM ELEMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

	Poor to fair	Fair to good	Good to great	Great to excellent
Focus	Achieving basic literacy and numeracy	Getting the system foundations in place	Shaping the professional	Learning through peers and innovation
Reform element	Providing scaffolding and motivation for low-skill teachers and principals	Data and accountability foundation	Raising caliber of existing teachers and principals	Raising caliber of entering teachers and principals
Example interventions	• Prescriptive teaching materials • Technical skill building • External coaches • School visits by system leaders • Instructional time on task	• Student assessments • Transparency to schools and/or public on school performance • School inspections	• Inservice training programs • School-based coaching • Career tracks • Teacher community forums	• Collaborative practice among educators • Decentralizing pedagogical rights to schools and teachers • Creating rotation and secondment programs across schools, and between the system level and schools
Selected systems	Chile, Madhya Pradesh, Minas Gerais, Western Cape, Ghana	Armenia, Chile, Hong Kong, Latvia, Poland, Singapore	England, Lithuania, Slovenia, South Korea	Hong Kong, South Korea, Ontario, Saxony, Singapore

Source: Mourshed, M., Chijioke, C., & Barber, M. (2010). *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better.* London, England: McKinsey & Company. Available at http://mckinseyonsociety.com/how-the-worlds-most-improved-school-systems-keep-getting-better.

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

WHAT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LOOKS LIKE AROUND THE WORLD

By Lois Brown Easton

Y ou are thinking about teaching outside the United States, and you're wondering what kind of professional learning opportunities you will have. If you teach in Poland, you will likely have the assistance of a school-based *pedagog* who will help you and your colleagues with instructional strategies.

If you teach in Alberta, Canada, you have a wealth of support from both the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education (the ministry), which cooperated to devise teacher standards and worked collaboratively with other organizations to produce a bevy of support tools for professional learning (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010).

In Brazil, you might be involved in individual or collaborative research — over half of Brazilian teachers have done so — and, since funding for professional learning is at the school level, you'll have the benefit of deciding with your colleagues what to do to enhance your learning. Feedback is important to improvement, and in Chile, you'll get feedback through a teacher evaluation system based on multiple sources of information: your self-evaluation, a portfolio, peer evaluation by an outside

evaluator, and a third-party reference report, all leading to a professional learning plan that will guide your improvement strategy.

In Australia, you might join with others in a pub or school library at a TeachMeet (www.teachmeet.net). There, you might share in five to seven minutes your own instructional gems and then network with others regarding what they shared. This grassroots movement is spreading rapidly. You'll also have the benefit of a set of teacher standards developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (n.d.), including two powerful standards for professional learning.

In Korea, you will find yourself in a culture that has high respect for the teaching profession and working with the "best of the best" teachers who value their own learning. In Japan, you can expect to engage in school-based learning, such as lesson study, which is so common that it is not even designated professional learning. It is just what Japanese teachers do, and there's time and support for it built into the system. As a first-year teacher, you would have had extensive induction consisting of 60 days on-campus and 30 days off-campus, some in an off-site retreat location. As a 10-year teacher, you can expect additional training, with some prefectures also requiring training at the 5th and 15th year of teaching.

OVERVIEW

In a survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 89% of teachers in 24 countries reported that they engaged in professional learning during an 18-month period, according to OECD's 2009 report *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS.* (TALIS is the Teaching and Learning International Survey, an international study of teachers, teaching, and learning environments.) That's a good number, until you consider the 11% who reported no professional learning during that period.

That's comparable to the situation in the United States, according to a report produced for the National Staff Development Council (now Learning Forward), *Professional*

KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: Poland

- Poland has made great progress in education since World War II and occupation.
- Overall reform in 1999, supported and monitored by the European Union, significantly changed education in Poland.
- Education is highly centralized through the Ministry of National Education, with regional administrations responsible for teacher training and professional learning.
- Nonpublic schools receive funding and are required to follow laws and regulations as if they were public schools.
- School communes or districts select head teachers, and schools are run by a pedagogical council employing at least three teachers.
- On average, students scored 501 in reading literacy, math, and science on PISA, higher than the OECD average of 497, third (behind Finland and Ireland) on literacy.
- The difference between high- and low-achieving students on international assessments is 97 points (OECD average is 99 points).
- Poland's evaluation system features inspectors at the national level and regional, school, and individual teacher appraisals.
- Student standards are expressed as grade-level aims, a core curriculum allowing local autonomy and responsibility, and student assessments carried out by institutions external to schools.
- 90.4% of teachers participated in professional learning in an 18-month period (compared to 89% OECD average) with an average of 26.1 days (compared to OECD average about 15 days).
- Highest participation is in reading professional literature, engaging in informal dialogue with colleagues, and courses and workshops.
- Individual appraisal is related to professional development for 87% of teachers (compared to 64.5% OECD average).
- 42.1% of teachers have a role in school reform (compared to 29.6% OECD average).
- 47.6% have a professional development plan related to appraisal (compared to 37.4% OECD average).
- First-year teachers experience a yearlong internship before being contracted; then they have another internship of two years and nine months before becoming appointed teachers.
- Most schools have a resident specialist in education.
- 43.6% want more professional development (compared to 54.8% OECD average), especially in special education.
- The biggest barrier to more professional learning is cost (51.2%, compared to 28.5% OECD average).

— *Lois Brown Easton*
Source: OECD, 2009.

Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 5). Unfortunately, the duration of most of these professional learning opportunities is too short to make much difference in practice (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 34).

More teachers reported attending courses, workshops, conferences, and seminars than any other type of professional learning: 92% of teachers in the U.S. and 49% (for conferences and seminars) and 80% (for courses and workshops) in the 24 countries surveyed by OECD for TALIS (see tables at right). On TALIS, OECD reported moderate to high impact of these professional learning activities.

The highest degree of participation was in informal dialogue with colleagues about teaching with colleagues (91%) with relatively high impact (87%).

What's particularly interesting about these results is how few people participate in degree programs — perhaps because of cost and commitment — but how strongly they report the impact of these programs. Also, while few are able to observe classrooms in other schools, those observations have considerable impact. The same is true of networks — both internal, as in professional learning communities, and external, as in professional organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Most telling is the difference between participation in individual and collaborative research (35%) and the impact of this activity (89%).

For the U.S., Darling-Hammond reported, "Teachers say that their top priorities for further professional development are learning more about the content they teach (23%), classroom management (18%), teaching students with special needs (15%), and using technology in the classroom (14%)" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 6). They elaborated on the need for pro-

TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND LEVEL OF ESTIMATED IMPACT

Type of professional learning experience	OECD average participation	OECD average % reporting moderate to high impact	U.S. average participation
Courses or workshops	80%	81%	92%
Conferences or seminars	49%	74%	
Degree programs	25%	87%	36%
Observations in other schools	28%	73%	22%
Network of teachers formed for professional learning purposes	40%	80%	No data
Individual or collaborative research	35%	89%	No data
Induction (for teachers new to the school)	45%	78%	45%
Mentoring (for teachers new to the school)	70%		71%
Reading professional literature	82%	83%	No data
Informal dialogue about teaching	91%	87%	No data

Sources: Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; OECD, 2009.

PARTICIPATION IN, DEGREE OF USEFULNESS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CONTENT

Content of professional learning	% of U.S. teachers participating in professional learning on this topic in 2003-04	% of U.S. teachers who rated training on this topic useful or very useful	% of teachers worldwide who reported a high level of need for professional learning in this content area
Content of the subject(s) they teach	83%	59%	16%
Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices (knowledge mediation) in my main subject field(s)			17%
Uses of computers for instruction	64.9%	42.7%	25%
Reading instruction	60%	42.5%	No data
Student discipline and management in the classroom	43.5%	27.4%	21%
Student assessment practices	No data	No data	16%
Teaching students with special learning needs	No data	No data	31%
Teaching in a multicultural setting	No data	No data	14%
School management and administrator	No data	No data	10%
Student counseling	No data	No data	16%

Sources: Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; OECD, 2009.

Solution Tree

fessional learning related to teaching special needs students: "Teachers are not getting adequate training in teaching special education or limited English proficiency students. More than two-thirds of teachers nationally had not had even one day of training in supporting the learning of special education or LEP students during the previous three years, and only one-third agreed that they had been given the support they needed to teach students with special needs" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 6).

BARRIERS

It is clear from TALIS data and reports on professional learning in the U.S. that "the professional development needs of a significant proportion of teachers are not being met" (Scheerens, 2010, p. 82). According to OECD, TALIS data showed that, "on average across countries, more than half of the teachers surveyed reported having wanted more professional development than they had received. The extent of unsatisfied demand is sizeable in every country, ranging from 31% in Belgium (Fl.) to over 80% in Brazil, Malaysia, and Mexico" (OECD, 2009, p. 59). According to TALIS, barriers to more professional learning include not having prerequisites (7.2%), cost (28.5%), lack of employer support (15%), conflict with work schedule (46.8%), family responsibilities (30.1%), and no suitable professional development (42.3%) (OECD, 2009, p. 72).

> What's particularly interesting ... is how few people participate in degree programs — perhaps because of cost and commitment — but how strongly they report the impact of these programs.

Most troubling are the reports that employers don't support professional learning, professional learning conflicts with teachers' work schedules, and there's no suitable professional development. In an optimum system, of course, professional learning would be embedded in a teacher's workday. Educators know enough about how adults learn to provide effective professional learning experiences that make a difference in terms of practice and, ultimately, in student learning.

GLOBAL ISSUES

As countries work to improve the **quality** of teaching and learning in their systems, they need to keep in mind these considerations:
- Professional learning is requisite for 21st-century teaching and learning.
- In the next decade, most countries are facing teacher shortages (Asia Society, 2012, p. 12), but, more importantly, need to focus on having enough quality teachers in their systems.
- Self-efficacy — an important aspect of job satisfaction — is critical for attracting and keeping the best professionals

in schools. Professional learning contributes to feelings of self-efficacy.
- Innovation is crucial for schools and teachers, and professional learning helps individuals, schools, and systems innovate.
- What's known about effective teaching can be learned.
- What's known about what works in terms of high-quality professional learning can be implemented.
- What's known about school- and system-level conditions that privilege high-quality professional learning can be achieved.
- Standards for professional learning are valuable, whether they're embedded in teacher quality standards or stand alone.
- Every system needs an orientation towards results, both interim and, ultimately, related to student achievement.
- Evaluation systems — designed and used effectively — may be an important leverage for quality professional learning.
- Educators desperately need more professional learning, but they need high-quality and effective professional learning.

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KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: **Australia**

- Governance of education is decentralized, with federal authority given to states and territories and reform supported through partnerships.

- Student achievement on international assessments is high but has decreased somewhat in the last few years.

- A first-time national curriculum in 2008 is the basis for comprehensive support for implementation provided through the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership and other partnership agencies.

- Teacher standards are presented developmentally and include two standards for professional learning.

- More than 95% of teachers participated in professional learning of some kind but averaged only 8.7 days every 18 months (TALIS averages were 89% participation and 15.3 days), most frequently courses and workshops.

- Participation in networks (mostly subject-area) was also high.

- Australia has a strong grassroots system of professional learning called TeachMeet.

- 93.1% of new teachers go through induction; 70.4% have mentors.

- 93.7% participate in informal dialogue with colleagues on teaching.

- 55.2% reported wanting more professional learning; however, the need is lower, generally, than in other countries surveyed by TALIS.

- Highest professional learning needs reported on TALIS are technology and teaching students with special needs.

- Other needs include: teacher use of assessment data, linking teacher evaluation and professional learning, relating grades to the curriculum, aligning teaching standards to student learning objectives, building a coherent system of learning from teacher preparation to career development, keeping coherence among all of the reform initiatives, and implementation of policies at the school levels.

- Barriers to additional professional learning, according to TALIS, include conflict with work schedule and no suitable professional learning.

- Teamwork among students and teachers is common.

- The public largely supports policy, practices, schools, and educators.

— *Lois Brown Easton*
Source: OECD, 2009.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: **Brazil**

- This formerly decentralized system is centralizing somewhat to enhance quality in municipal and state school systems.

- The most effective policies have been a national curriculum guideline, an assessment system, textbook approval, and data gathering leading to monitoring educational processes.

- Public funding for education is relatively small in terms of GDP (gross domestic product), but the increase in funding in 2008 was the highest for education in OECD countries.

- Secondary education is neither universal nor high quality, with high dropout and repetition rates, and a 41% graduation rate.

- Achievement on international tests is lower than OECD averages, and the gap between highest and lowest performers is wide.

- In some places, a belief that poor children cannot learn still dominates.

- School communities (parents, teachers, students) elect principals.

- Traditional teaching methods prevail, and student engagement is low; considerable time is spent on nonteaching routine items.

- 83% of Brazil's teachers engaged in professional learning in an 18-month period, an average of 17.3 days per teacher.

- Courses and workshops were the most frequent (80.3%); the least frequent activity was networking (21.9%).

- 73.3% of teachers do not have a formal induction process; 70.0% have not had mentoring.

- 84.4% reported wanting more professional learning (compared to 54.8% OECD average).

- Most want more professional learning on teaching special needs students (63.2%, compared to 31.3% OECD average) and teaching in a multicultural setting (33.2%, compared to 13.9% OECD average).

- The greatest barriers to more professional learning are cost (51%) and conflict with work schedule (57.8%).

- Generally, teachers have a less positive view of the impact of most professional learning than other OECD countries.

- There are no mandated, universal teacher standards or standards for professional learning.

- Teaching is a relatively low-status profession in Brazil.

— *Lois Brown Easton*
Source: OECD, 2009.

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KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: **Canada** (Alberta)

- The Canadian constitution delegates most of the authority for educational policy and practice to provincial ministries.

- Alberta Education has funding and regulatory functions but is also consultative, working with communities, jurisdictions, the Alberta Teachers' Association (to which almost all teachers belong, most required to do so), and seven learning consortia across the province.

- Schools follow the Program of Studies, which delineates curriculum, assessment, and achievement standards.

- On international and Canadian assessments, Alberta has scored significantly higher than the averages.

- Alberta has addressed equity actively. The difference between highest- and lowest-scoring students on international achievement tests is lower than the OECD average.

- Reform is strong in Alberta, although funding for one of the most successful reforms, the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement, which sponsored school and district innovation, was cut in April 2013.

- The Teaching Quality Standard establishes quality for teacher preparation programs, beginning teacher programs, and professional learning.

- The Alberta Teachers' Association and the ministry worked to separate salary negotiations from a focus on student and professional learning.

- Teachers are required to complete a professional growth plan related to the quality standard, school goals, and their own expectations.

- In a limited survey, the Alberta Teachers' Association noted that teachers have high (44%) to some (49%) autonomy and choice in pursuing growth plan goals.

- According to the Alberta Teachers' Association, 89% indicated that it was often evident or consistently evident that professional development supports school improvement goals.

- There's a strong and supportive environment for professional learning, a culture of high expectations, and a norm of collaboration.

— Lois Brown Easton

Sources: Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010; OECD Better Life Index: Canada, www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/Canada; Education at a Glance: Canada, 2011, www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: **Chile**

- In the 1980s, Chile went from being centralized (in a military regime) to decentralized (with democracy). In 2003, it began recentralizing some reforms in order to equalize opportunity and achieve quality in the system.

- In an attempt to equalize the system, the government subsidized schools through vouchers, creating municipal (public) schools and subsidized private schools (in addition to nonsubsidized private schools, which depend entirely on tuition).

- Inequity resulted because subsidized private schools also charge tuition or fees, which public schools cannot do; also, public schools need to accept all applicants and cannot fire low-performing staff.

- 53% of students were being educated in public schools in 2002, 9% attended private (nonvoucher) schools, and the rest attended private (voucher) schools.

- The 2013 budget shows record-high spending for education, but student (and other) groups are seeking redress for the inequities described above as well as quality schooling.

- The average student score on PISA of 439 is lower than the OECD average of 497.

- The average difference between high and low scorers on international exams is 99 points (similar to the OECD average). Chile performed better than other Latin American countries in reading and was second to one in math.

- In 2003, the ministry and teachers union developed standards for teachers.

- It has been difficult for Chile to attract high-quality teachers.

- Educational reform includes a program to strengthen the teaching profession through initial teacher training and professional learning.

- Professional learning is traditionally subject-oriented, but it may involve scholarships for short-term internships abroad.

- A teacher evaluation system is based on self-evaluation, a portfolio, peer evaluation by an outside evaluator, and a third-party reference report.

- Teachers who do not perform well on the evaluations are offered training, which may not be adequate. Those who perform well are offered rewards, a common incentive.

- Professional development is not of consistent quality.

— Lois Brown Easton

Sources: OECD Better Life Index: Chile, www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/chile; Education at a Glance: Chile 2012, www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012.htm.
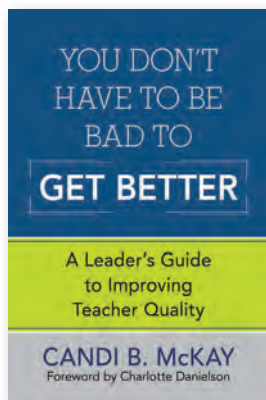
KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: **Japan**

- Japan's centralized system is administered by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture and Technology through prefectural and municipal boards.

- 33.6% of total expenditure for education comes from private sources, largely through tuition to private schools.

- High school attendance is optional, but 98% of all students enter high school and more than 90% graduate.

- In 1998, the system changed its focus from rote learning and extensive testing to creativity, independence, and social skills.

- Shortly afterward, student achievement on international tests declined, and the system instituted longer class hours and a demanding curriculum.

- Japanese students routinely score high on international assessments.

- The average middle school class size is 33 (compared to OECD average of 23.7 students).

- At high schools, teaching time with students is about 23% less than the average in other OECD countries.

- Teaching methods focus on collaboration among students and adults.

- Teaching is a highly respected career with more openings than applicants.

- School evaluation is prized over individual teacher appraisal and helps to promote collaboration and shared practice.

- Professional learning such as lesson study is embedded in the school day, continuous, focused on classroom practice, and often pairs senior with learning teachers.

- Schools have a high level of autonomy in professional learning.

- Professional development usually refers to courses taken outside the school (also called training or inservice).

- Extensive induction training features 60 days on campus and 30 days off.

- After 10 years, teachers engage in additional, required training. Some prefectures also require training at the 5th and 15th years of teaching.

- 30 hours (some mandated) are also required every 10 years but can include professional learning within schools.

- There are no standards for professional development.

— *Lois Brown Easton*

KEY CHARACTERISTICS IN: **Korea**

- Korea has a centralized system, with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology providing funding, policy direction, programs, and support to provincial educational agencies that oversee schools.

- 42.6% of funding for education comes from private sources (compared to 81.3% OECD average).

- Teaching is a high-status, secure career, with many more adults applying for openings than there are positions.

- Average student scores on PISA are higher than the OECD average and one of the highest in the OECD.

- The average difference between low-achieving and high-achieving students is 82 points, lower than OECD's average of 99 points.

- A comprehensive evaluation system includes system, school, and teacher appraisal tied to student assessments and other measures.

- 92% of middle school teachers participated in some form of professional learning during an 18-month period (compared to 89% OECD average) for an average number of 30 days per person (compared to OECD average of 18 days).

- 85% participated in courses or workshops and 90% in informal dialogue with colleagues. Participation in observations was high at 66.8% (compared to 28% OECD average).

- Only 24.3% had scheduled time for professional learning (compared to 62.8% OECD average).

- 58.2% wanted more professional learning (compared to 54.8% OECD average). The highest need was in student counseling (41.5%, compared to 16.7% OECD average).

- The lowest need was wanting help with multicultural teaching (10.4%, compared to 13.9% OECD average).

- The chief barrier to more professional learning was conflict with work schedule (73.3%, compared to 46.8% OECD average).

- There are no public standards for professional learning; the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology accredits programs that are offered through municipalities.

- School-based professional learning opportunities appear to be limited.

— *Lois Brown Easton*

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Q&A with

KRISTEN WEATHERBY

A WORLD *of* IDEAS

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY GIVES A VOICE TO TEACHERS EVERYWHERE

By Tracy Crow

JSD: Could you give us an overview of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)?

Kristen Weatherby: TALIS was started in 2008. It was created to fill gaps in international data around teachers and teaching, but it also looks at teacher working conditions and learning environments. So it gives teachers a voice. In the TALIS survey, teachers are encouraged to talk about their own experiences in their schools and as teachers.

JSD: What does TALIS tell us about professional learning?

Weatherby: In TALIS 2008, (see links to web resources from the study in the box on p. 26) we looked at professional development in particular, and we asked teachers about the kinds of professional development experiences they have access to. We asked them, for example, over the last 18 months, how many days they had spent in professional development, what kind of professional development they had, whether it was a workshop or a course or a lecture or some other type of experience, whether it was in school or out of school. And then we asked them how that contributed to their own professional growth and their own development in the teaching profession.

We also asked teachers what kind of support they receive from their school or school district, if they are given time off for professional development, if they had the cost contributed to, if it was part of the workday, or if it was

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outside of working hours. We also asked if they receive any kind of salary stipend and if there were any barriers to professional development. For example, barriers might be that they didn't have time or there weren't enough quality offerings available for whatever they needed at that time.

We found that teacher professional development needs varied according to whether teachers were new or experienced. But 55% of all teachers wanted more professional development — they felt like they needed more help. New teachers also reported having more issues around classroom management: spending less time teaching than experienced teachers and more time on student discipline or classroom management issues. All teachers wanted more support in

particular on teaching special need students.

We also highlight some interesting things in a new report that looked at the data in different ways. First, we looked at what teachers say about the variety of classroom practices they're able to employ. For example, we examined whether the practices teachers report using are teacher-directed or student-led. We found that only a minority of teachers in every country reports a comparatively frequent use of a variety of teaching practices. This is significant because a variety of teaching practices is associated with student achievement. Greater variety allows teachers to reach more students in their classroom based on students' learning style or the speed with which they're able to grasp a particular concept. With more teaching practices, the teachers have more tools in their toolbox. This highlights a real professional development need.

The second finding we explored in this new report is around professional learning communities. The report defines a professional learning community as a schoolwide learning community with a shared objective of improving student learning along with sustained and systemic professional learning strategies.

We asked teachers about five different concepts and whether they are present in professional learning communities. We asked if they shared the vision for learning at their school and whether they contribute to that vision. We wanted to know if they were able to focus on learning at their school and if that was the primary focus. We also asked if they worked in a culture that encouraged reflection on practice, and if they taught as a team or were able to observe other teachers. Finally, we asked them if they had collaborative learning activities at their school — did they plan together, did they assess students together, did they have collaborative professional development?

We found that, even though countries and schools all over the world are talking about professional learning communities, very few teachers reported that they're part of a professional learning community. We're talking about this finding quite a bit because, while professional learning communities are a great opportunity for continuous support for teachers in school on the job — and even though schools think these are happening — according to our findings, they aren't, according to our definition. (See link to this report, *Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Innovation: Evidence from TALIS*, in box on p. 26.)

It's important to note that we don't like to look at any of these things in isolation. We talk a lot about teachers' reports of self-efficacy — how effective they feel they are as teachers — which is also associated with student outcomes, according to a lot of research. We found that teachers who report higher self-efficacy are more involved in professional development, including professional development that occurs outside the school. They also get more feedback on their teaching. Teachers with higher self-efficacy also report that they participate in professional learning communities and that they use a variety of teaching practices. All of these things are related, and they're all really important.

TEACHER EVALUATION

JSD: At the recent International Summit on the Teaching Profession, your topic was teacher evaluation and its role in improving teaching. What did you hear at that summit?

Weatherby: We talked about what teacher evaluation is being used for. Is it being used just to root out the bad teachers and fire them? Or is it being used to help teachers realize the areas in which they need to improve their practice and provide them the support to do that? There is a range of models.

In Finland, there are no national evaluation frameworks for teachers, and, in fact, there's no teacher evaluation in a formal sense. Every year, the school has a development plan, and teachers meet with their school principal every year to create a development plan based on the school development plan. They plan the kind of professional learning that they think they need and the school principal discusses it with them. There's a strong culture of reflection on practice and opportunity for observation.

Another country that does that same thing really well is Canada, in Ontario specifically. Teachers develop or update an existing professional development plan every year, they have growth objectives and an action plan, and they work on that with the school principal over the course of the year.

In Singapore, they do something similar, but it's more competency-based, and it does play a role in how teachers are evaluated as well. But what's great about Singapore is they have a career structure for teachers that allows them to develop and progress while they stay teaching. There is a master teacher career track so teachers can continue to advance as classroom teachers.

TRUST

JSD: As you discussed teacher evaluation, did you see that countries covered the whole range of a spectrum that had evaluation at one end strictly as an accountability tool and at the other end as a purely developmental tool?

Weatherby: The range is pretty spread out because there are a couple of countries that actually test teachers and then the Nordic countries tend to be like Finland,

where they don't have a national framework for evaluation and there's an ongoing practice of reflection. One example is a national project in Norway, where the larger union of teachers and the national student organization have gotten together to look at how teacher appraisal can include student feedback. The students are given a survey that focuses on their experience with the teacher's practice because students have a very important voice in this. The feedback is given to the teacher in such a way that it's anonymous and really focuses on positive development for the teacher.

In Sweden, teachers will conduct a survey among their own students to get feedback on their teaching, and the results are not made public. They're only used by the teacher who is giving the survey. That reflection on practice helps teachers to figure out whether they're meeting the needs of their students. It's not tied to any kind of high-stakes assessment of teacher performance. It's just for development.

Trust was another really big aspect of the discussion at the teacher summit. Teachers have to trust the people evaluating them, and they have to trust what they're being evaluated against. Also, they have to trust that it has some benefit for them, and that the person evaluating them has the capacity to do it.

New Zealand and Australia are good examples of countries that work to establish trust in their systems. They've done a lot of work around developing teacher standards that are developed with and by teachers and taken it to an extreme. Australia conducted online surveys and focus groups all in every state and territory. They surveyed more than 6,000 teachers and hundreds of schools to develop these standards, so everybody trusts them.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

JSD: Where else are you seeing countries with strong reflective practices that encourage ongoing learning?

Weatherby: They have a culture in Singapore where everybody working in education is expected to be a lifelong learner. There's so much work in Singapore with mentoring and participation in collaborative groups. Teachers in Singapore view other teachers teaching practice lessons, and they videotape the lessons and use those videos to give feedback and decide how to build the lessons together.

This is also starting to happen in China. One of the problems that we've talked about in earlier teacher summits is that Shanghai is growing so quickly and there tends to be higher-quality teachers in the schools in the center of Shanghai because that's where everybody wants to be. Then as you get further out from the center of Shanghai, it's more difficult to provide high-quality teachers. So they've taken high-performing teachers and school leaders from retirement and brought them into some of these newer schools as mentors. They don't just come in and give a class, for example. They stay in the schools to observe the practices, help teachers develop lessons, and help build capacity amongst the staff.

MENTORING AND INDUCTION

JSD: In addition to what's happening with reflective practices and learning communities, what other professional learning trends did you learn about through TALIS?

Weatherby: One trend we're seeing is the use of mentoring and induction programs for new teachers. We have a report for TALIS that looks specifically at teachers who have been teaching for two years or less versus more experienced teachers. We're able to look at where new teachers felt they have needs for professional development, what their challenges are in terms of teaching, and how much time they're spending teaching as opposed to other activities. We've found that the use of mentoring and induction programs is becoming more popular and might extend beyond just the newest teachers in the school. And the induction programs aren't just administrative to the school. They might be focused on supporting the new teachers in their teaching practices.

JSD: Do you have the sense that educators in other countries share a feeling that one-shot workshops without follow-up or disconnected inservice days are not tied to what a teacher needs to learn, and that perhaps other practices are more useful for teacher growth?

Weatherby: Yes, there is that sense. I just came from working for four years in the United Kingdom in England, Scotland, and Wales, in particular. Recently, there have been many cuts to government departments, and many schools have become more independent from their local government structures. What that means is many schools don't have a central place to go for access to professional development. Because of this, many schools are required to find their own professional development solutions. I have worked with many head teachers, principals in the U.K., who are simply freeing up teachers' classroom time so they can observe other teachers, the kind of work that can be ongoing, free, and can create a culture of reflective practice. These kinds of activities are happening both because taking teachers out of the school for training is expensive but also not as effective in many cases.

NATIONAL POLICY

JSD: In what other ways do you see national policies impacting professional learning?

Weatherby: A lot of the policy requirements for professional learning are about the number of hours or days that teachers get access to. They range quite a bit. In England, teachers get five days of professional development per year, and in Scotland, they get 35 hours plus five days. In Estonia and Iceland, teachers get 150 hours of professional development. In Iceland, they get that every year, and in Estonia, they get that only for five years. So it's really interesting that kind of variation in policy just even around how much access teachers have.

In very few countries, there is mandated content in policy

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recommendations on the kind of training teachers get. Almost half of the professional development the teachers have access to in Japan is mandated. There are certain courses that they have to take every year. But in Belgium, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, and Iceland, teachers can do whatever they want for the state or whatever they've agreed on with their school principal. In a lot of places, there is policy guidance that school principals and teachers have to meet together to determine a professional development plan. I mentioned earlier this happens in Finland.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

JSD: Are you seeing anywhere that communities in general — not just the educators — believe that professional learning has an essential tie to student achievement, and that this premise makes those societies more supportive of professional learning?

Weatherby: I think it's difficult in any country to make that link unless you the data to prove that professional development is linked to student achievement. It's really difficult to find that data. This gets to the bottom of any kind of education policy shift — how is this going to improve student achievement? I worked in education technology for years, and without the data that shows using information and communications technology actually improves student achievement, a lot of school districts and governments don't want to make those kinds of investments.

There's a lot of talk now about developing teaching as a profession. If we want teachers to provide the kinds of learning experiences where students will be able to solve the problems of tomorrow, to become lifelong learners and so forth, and if we want to get more high-quality people into the teaching profession, we need to treat teaching as a profession. But when you compare teaching to other professions, such as the medical profession, teachers in general aren't exposed to cutting-edge research on what makes a better teacher or what teaching practices are most successful. And exposing teachers to that kind of work and giving them the ongoing support that they need to apply new practices — it doesn't happen any kind of systemic way.

This conversation about teaching as a profession and developing teachers as professionals is really important. We need to think of teachers as knowledge workers, frankly, who are then able to provide experiences for students that will benefit countries in the long run. And, of course, professional learning is a huge part of that.

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Tracy Crow (tracy.crow@learningforward.org) is Learning Forward's director of communications. ■

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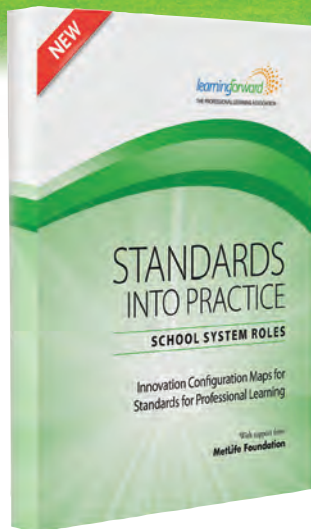
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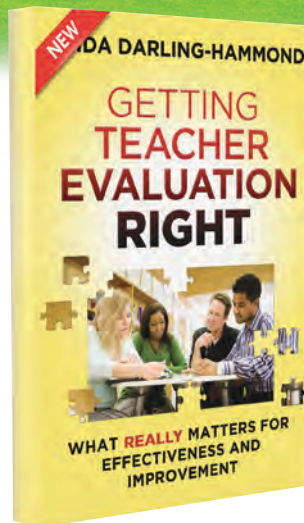
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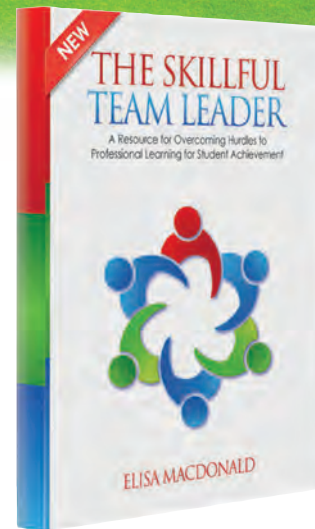
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TECHNOLOGY CLOSES *the* DISTANCE

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS SHOW THE VARIETY, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY OF DISTANCE LEARNING OPTIONS

By Mary Burns

The number of U.S. teachers participating in some form of distance education is on the rise, yet compared to many nations, distance-based professional learning is fairly new in the U.S. What are common elements of effective global distance education for teachers, and what lessons do they hold for those who design similar programs in the U.S.? Over the course of two years, Education Development Center researched distance-based teacher pro-

fessional learning in nearly 100 countries. Here are five key elements and the larger lessons they hold for the U.S.

1. DIVERSE TECHNOLOGIES

In the U.S., distance education essentially means online learning. But internationally, distance education is a much broader term that encompasses a variety of technology-based models. (For examples, see chart on p. 30.)

Many Asian, African and Latin American teachers can observe other technology-based pedagogical models, not just online ones. Many teachers

across the globe can participate in more technologically differentiated learning programs than their American counterparts. And, depending on the model, many teachers participate in established and research-based forms of distance learning.

One example of a commonly used distance education technology is television. Television, especially instructional television — a highly structured version that blends visual information with narration, freeze frames, and discussion via two-way communication — has been a major form of teacher professional development in Brazil, Mexico, and China. China, which has the largest educational television network in the world, still uses broadcast and instructional television to engage millions of teachers in professional learning.

Why, in this Internet age, do nations like China still favor television for teacher learning? Television and other visual models of professional learning, such as video, are familiar and engaging media. They do not require technology training to use. They are versatile (programs can be broadcast live or prerecorded). They present conceptual information visually. They allow teachers to observe other teachers as they apply new practices and model the very behaviors teachers are supposed to imple-

ment. TV and video may not be new technologies, but they are proven technologies with a body of demonstrated effectiveness in teacher education that online learning still lacks (Wang, 2000).

2. PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Though web-based learning is supposed to be personalized and individualized, many teachers still end up in one-size-fits-all online courses. One effort to personalize teacher learning comes from Korea, where teachers can access Internet protocol TV, a blend of high-definition Internet TV, video or multimedia, mobile devices, and social media.

Teachers use smartphones to order playlists of professional learning content, which can be delivered to their TVs, gaming consoles, tablets, or smartphones. As part of this approach, teachers create personalized playlists of professional learning and education-related programming, view these at their own convenience, and engage in online, facilitated post-program discussions via their computers or cell phones.

3. CLASSROOM-BASED DELIVERY

In many poor and remote locations of the globe, where access to expertise and support is often lacking, technology provides teachers with just-in-time learning. Education Development Center projects in Indonesia have used two-way video to allow experienced teachers in one location to co-teach with a novice teacher in a remote location and to facilitate open classrooms — a professional learning model common in many parts of Asia in which novice teachers learn about teaching by observing a master teacher's classroom.

The most successful in-class distance learning model is an old

technology. Interactive audio instruction and its broadcast equivalent, interactive radio instruction, were developed at Stanford University in the 1970s. Interactive audio instruction has been used for decades in the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, and Africa to provide in-class instruction to students and teachers via radio or CDs.

With interactive audio instruction, the audio teacher orally directs the classroom teacher through a progression of curriculum-based learning episodes based on measurable learning objectives. Instruction is directed primarily at students and secondarily at teachers.

This dual audience approach has proven to be highly effective in helping teachers implement learner-centered instruction or employ new innovations (for example, science kits) (Evans & Pier, 2008). Because this professional learning occurs during classroom instruction, it directly confronts the implementation gap that so often accompanies professional learning outside the classroom.

4. MOBILITY

In parts of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, many teachers grapple with issues of geographic isolation, conflict, a lack of teaching materials, and a shortage of formal learning opportunities. To address such issues, a number of learning initiatives have capitalized on cell phones — a technology teachers own and know how to use — as a versatile conduit for resources, support, and instruction.

For instance, cell phones have been used to instruct teachers in Niger in the national language, French, via text messaging. In Indonesia, instructional coaches use cell phones in combination with video to provide live coaching and support to teachers in mountainous and remote locations.

In Mali and South Africa, teachers without access to teaching materials or curriculum have received both, along with instruction on their use, via cell phones. South African and Indonesian teachers can capitalize on high rates of cell phone ownership, nationwide cellular coverage, and the mobile phone platform Moodle Mobile to participate in online courses — an otherwise unavailable learning opportunity given uneven access to computers and the Internet. And new teachers in rural Zambia participate in weekly cell phone peer-support discussions with their colleagues and with their mentor.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

Social networking now represents the dominant global pattern of Internet use, with one of every seven minutes online spent on Facebook (comScore, 2011). Use of social media continues to increase everywhere (including the U.S., which ranks 10th globally in social media use) (Media Measurement, 2012). In every region of the globe, women — who form the majority of the U.S. teaching force (NCES, 2011) — outstrip men in the use of social media (Abraham, Mörn, & Vollman, 2010).

Distance education models and examples

MODEL	EXAMPLES
Audio-based	• Interactive radio instruction (broadcasts). • Interactive radio instruction (narrowcasts). • Audio conferencing. • Two-way radio. • Broadcast radio. • Podcasting.
Televisual	• Broadcast TV (educational and instructional TV). • Video. • Videoconferencing.
Multimedia	• Interactive video (disk and tape). • CD-ROM. • DVD. • Interactive multimedia. • Computer-aided instruction. • Games.
Web-based	• Computer-mediated communication. • Online courses. • Virtual classes. • Webinars. • Webcasts. • Simulations.
Mobile	• Smartphones. • Cell phones. • Tablets. • MP3 players.

Source: Burns, 2011.

These social media trends have spurred a variety of responses. Singapore and Korea have responded by directly integrating social networking into their professional learning. For example, Singaporean teachers participate in online learning through the social networking site EdModo.

In Indonesia, Education Development Center shifted much online learning to social media applications such as VoiceThread, resulting in more sustained teacher participation. Though it is difficult to quantify, the real promise of so much social media use by teachers appears to be its organic and teacher-driven aspect, with teachers from the Philippines to Brazil seeking out and forming their own networks for tailored, convenient, collaborative, and free instruction and support.

Professional learning networks facilitated by social media offer valuable supports for professional learning. They complement and enhance face-to-face relationships, deepening existing relationships or "bonding ties" (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Bonding ties often form the basis of communities of practice,

which in turn are instrumental in helping schools and teachers institutionalize new ideas and practice.

In addition, social networking allows teachers to benefit from "the strength of weak ties" (Granovetter, 1983). Novel or new information flows to individuals through weak, versus strong, ties. Since we move in the same circles as our peers, we tend to know the same information. But by interacting with new and more experienced peers, teachers can acquire new knowledge and skills from people with whom they would not normally come in contact.

LESSONS FOR THE U.S.

The real lessons for the U.S. speak less about technology and more about organizational beliefs and values regarding teacher learning and professional development.

These approaches demonstrate how technology can begin to build on and deliver the types of learning teachers say they want. Despite the diversity of our educational systems, teachers in a number of countries cite common weaknesses with the professional learning they receive: its lack of frequency and duration; a mismatch between the most common format (workshops/trainings) and the models teachers consider most effective (professional learning networks); a dearth of school-based professional learning; and participation by teachers with higher, versus lower, qualifications (OECD, 2008).

Without technology, addressing these weaknesses might be impossible for many districts because of the demands placed on existing professional learning staff. With technology, as these global examples show, teachers can participate in a greater variety of learning opportunities. Professional learning can be made more equitable, efficient, and targeted — for example, by leveraging expertise and coaching to help novice and at-risk teachers practice and hone their skills in classroom settings.

These global approaches also demonstrate a shift to teacher-centered professional learning, with activities that focus on teachers as learners. The technology approaches described here target learning that accommodates teachers' individual learning needs, styles, and professional realities. They use technology to furnish models of the practices and behaviors teachers are supposed to implement. They connect teachers, especially in isolated areas, to a community of professionals with whom they can collaborate and learn. They provide differentiated and personalized learning, and, above all, they bring the support of caring and skilled mentors and coaches directly to a teacher's classroom.

These approaches expand the possibilities of online learning, moving beyond what we often see in online programs: the talking-head webcast or the traditional text-based online course involving the teacher as a solo learner. Rather, these global approaches demonstrate that online learning can be multifaceted, involving theory, guided practice, interaction, and reflection, and provide learning that really is anytime, anyplace — even

in the teacher's classroom, if desired.

These examples are a reminder that the most successful distance learning programs for teachers are defined, not by the technologies they use, but by the values they exemplify and the practices they embody. The best distance learning for teachers is content-focused, designed and evaluated based on a set of standards, and mirrors the same best practices used in face-to-face professional learning (Burns, 2011).

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> The real lessons for the U.S. speak less about technology and more about organizational beliefs and values regarding teacher learning and professional development.

"We are assisting students who will be living in the future, not the past. We need to look at things globally," says Wilma Culton, principal of Serpell Primary School near Melbourne, Australia.

VICTORIA'S LEADING EDGE

AUSTRALIAN STATE PUTS HUMAN CAPITAL AT THE HEART OF ITS IMPROVEMENT PLANS

By Valerie von Frank

Principal Wilma Culton's professional development in the last few years has had her setting out for Singapore, conferencing in Canada, and bopping over to Berlin to check out what experts and the best educators around the world know about helping kids learn.

The head of a primary school just outside Melbourne, Australia, Culton is a prime example of the State of Victoria's emphasis on improving education by looking to the world for answers — and its own people to learn them.

"The government encourages us to reach out and look at global trends and context," Culton said. "We are assisting students who will be living in the future, not the past. We need to look at things globally."

For the past decade, Victoria's blueprint has put human capital at the heart of its plan for improvement. Investing in educators' professional learning and benchmarking student achievement against the highest-performing nations in the world are hallmarks of that effort.

The best systems achieve their goals, writes Martin Dixon, minister for education in Victoria, "through a highly professional and networked workforce: a community of professionals where the best make everyone better" (State of Victoria, 2012).

Victoria's commitment to developing educators' knowledge over the long term led Richard Elmore, Gregory R. Anrig Professor of Educational Leadership at Harvard University and director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, to say that the state "is on the leading edge of policy and practice in the world" (Elmore, 2012).

'LEARNING BREAKS OUT'

In remarks at the Learning Forward Annual Conference in 2012, Richard Elmore pointed out that Victoria is a system with more than 1,500 schools and over a half million students, yet "there are just two people between you and the person running the system." By removing layers of bureaucracy, Elmore said, the Australian state "cashed out overhead to spend on professional development."

Through not suppressing what people within the system already know, he said, "learning breaks out."

Victoria's model is distinctive, according to Elmore (2007), because it:

- **Focuses on creating human capital:** "Investing thoughtfully and coherently in the knowledge and skill of educators" and changing past practices "through collective, concerted, and sustained learning on the part of everyone in the system."

- **Has broad agreement:** Policymakers and practitioners agree that investing in the knowledge and skill of people will bring about the desired change. "In most settings outside Victoria, there are very costly gaps in understanding between policymakers and practitioners around the central imperative of human investment," Elmore wrote.

Richard Elmore

- **Uses data to make decisions:** Professional learning decisions are based on data — student achievement, and teacher, student, and parent attitudes toward their schools. "Throughout the system, in my experience, people talk about the data as a means for focusing attention on improvement, rather than as a mark of status and a trigger for sanctions," Elmore wrote.

- **Views accountability as part of developing human capital.** "In many other systems, including all state accountability systems in the U.S. and the U.S. national policy (No Child Left Behind), accountability for performance is considered to be the leading instrument of policy, and human investment is considered to be a collateral responsibility of states and localities, which can be exercised according to their preference," Elmore wrote.

- **Makes leaders the "carriers of the new culture of school improvement":** Elmore said most large-scale improvement efforts recognize the importance of leadership, work to develop new leaders, and support leaders' learning, but in Victoria, "the leadership strategy is essentially the leading instrument in the cultural transformation of the enterprise."

SYSTEM-LEVEL APPROACH

Victoria creates a system that expects classroom teachers will "have access to sustained professional development over the entire course of their careers," Elmore said, and their learning coordinates with organization and system goals for student learning growth. Leaders create the conditions for continuous learning in schools, developing teachers' leadership capacity and being learners themselves.

A system-level approach to supporting leaders is based on Tom Sergiovanni's five dimensions of leadership: technical, human, cultural, educational, and symbolic — "creating a common language for analyzing and discussing the leadership function in school improvement," Elmore said.

School leaders get together in regional networks, for professional learning, and on the Big Day Out, a statewide professional learning day that draws leaders from throughout the system to learn from experts from throughout the world. In addition, Elmore noted, principals have individual learning plans through which "the language and expectations of the leadership model and its use as an instrument of school improvement are made explicit in accountability relationships."

While the U.S. has brought federal and state pressure to bear on increasing student performance, government left local districts to make decisions about professional devel-

Victoria's school system	
87,645	square miles (the size of Minnesota, the U.S.'s 12th-largest state)
1,137	primary schools
75	primary/secondary schools
245	secondary schools
76	special schools
4	language schools
546,499	students
40,730	teaching staff (including principals)

Source: Government of Victoria.

opment. "(T)he states and the federal government exert increasing pressure on schools to perform, but they have essentially defaulted on their responsibility for human investment, leading to an increasingly large number of low-performing schools that continue to operate at low capacity," he wrote.

Victoria, on the other hand, emphasizes using school data to determine what educators need to know to better help students.

The early implementation stage included "developing the idea of a comprehensive strategy of school improvement reframing the role of the department around that strategy, reorienting the state and regional offices around a new mission, and beginning the long, laborious job of connecting the broader framework of improvement to the daily work of people in schools."

Victoria's culture has begun the shift to improve educators' daily work, changing the culture from one of individualism to a system of collaboration. "Networks are beginning to form increasingly ambitious ideas about what collaboration means," he wrote.

Elmore cautioned that, as the system begins its shift, it faces challenges, including staying the course as large-scale improvement invariably increase disparities among schools in student achievement before decreasing the differences as schools — and staff — gear up at different rates.

SERPELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Culton has been head of Serpell Primary School for 15 years. Located in Templestowe, about 15 kilometers (about 9.3 miles) outside Melbourne, Serpell is one of the largest primary schools in the state, with 960 students in 42 classes. Culton is directly responsible for the school's $6 million budget, employing staff, maintaining the building and grounds, and deciding how to improve student learning and staff professional learning.

Despite being an award-winning leader in Victoria, despite the accolades from Elmore, Culton can't rest. "Systems in Asia have been passing us," she said. "While we have some outstanding schools and classes and students, we still have some low-performing students, particularly our indigenous students."

She is continually questioning, continually seeking best practices that she can implement in her school. Victoria's change model, filtered to the school level, plays out in several ways at Serpell.

Data-driven accountability

While the system is decentralized, there is a balance with accountability. "It's a system of targets," Culton said.

The school council (school board) reviews school data every four years to create an improvement plan. The school then lays out targets and goals against which the principal and staff are assessed.

Staff base their individual performance plans on the school's strategic plan. Staff members review their progress twice a year

toward meeting those targets, and every six months, the leader of a regional network of schools meets with the school principal to talk about progress based on evidence and international testing. Schools doing poorly get a full state review plus extra support and funding to help them out of that position.

Serpell's leadership team, comprising the principal, three assistant principals (in charge of curriculum and student welfare; day-to-day management; and building teacher capacity and extending accelerated learning), and a teacher leader from each grade level representing six or seven sections of that grade, meets weekly to review class data.

"We look at patterns," Culton said. "We try hard to collect diagnostic data rather than just performance assessment data."

Having data online can show immediately where teachers may need support. "We can look at the variations among classes, for example. We've only been back to school eight weeks and already there are differences in the data," she said.

"Teachers like to say, 'Well, we have different kids.' I know that when we placed the children, that didn't happen. So looking at the trends and what people might need is part of our ongoing work. Although we have a fantastic model of observation, the question is, how do we move from that, from having our classrooms open and a discourse of discussing professional practice — how do we move everyone to the next stage of being a champion? That is a problem to be solved."

Research-based professional learning

Culton said she has always connected with faculty at nearby universities to offer staff members professional learning, bringing experts into the school weekly during the workday over the course of at least a year or two so the work is sustained. One, for example, taught about attachment theory — why people behave as they do, how they learn, how they organize themselves, and how to move them forward.

Every two weeks, the staff as a whole engages in professional learning. They have examined New Zealand professor John Hattie's research around instructional practices that make a difference, such as higher-order questioning, time teachers wait for student response, who talks the most in class. They have looked at positive ways to manage student behavior, goal setting, giving students feedback on how they are learning, student engagement, and best ways to organize the classroom.

While teachers have 2.5 hours a week of administrative planning time, they meet for an hour a week in professional learning communities. In addition, the school has instituted lesson studies after Culton observed them in China.

For lesson studies, special subject teachers, including art, physical education, library, and reading support, take the lead in classrooms, allowing teachers to plan together and then observe a lesson. Teachers meet afterward to discuss the lesson outline, the intention or target, and to reflect on student learning.

The effort is to connect the research to practice and really

home in on teachers' instruction, giving teachers time during the workday for professional learning.

"If it's not systematic, it's not going to work," Culton said. "We have to allow time for people to reflect, to look at someone teaching in the same culture. We don't want cardboard cutout teachers, but we want consistency in practice of the things we think are really important."

Culton's regional network of schools now engages in instructional rounds after learning about the practice from Elmore, and leaders regularly visit one another's classrooms to support teacher learning.

In instructional rounds, school leaders define a problem of practice and meet regularly to observe in classrooms in teams, gathering data on different parts of the lesson with a focus on what students are learning and what a good classroom looks like.

Leadership development

While the focus now is on drilling down into the classroom, Victoria also supports leaders. "We have a vibrant professional learning community," Culton said.

Leaders within the local government area network meet monthly for the regional director to talk about emerging issues and to listen to keynote talks. Annual conferences bring together 300 schools in the Eastern region to learn from world-class experts over three days of sessions focused on school improvement.

Leaders from throughout the state gather for the annual Big Day Out, in which experts from around the world — such as Andy Hargreaves, Michael Fullan, Elmore, Hattie, Tony Barber, and Yong Zhao — work "from a systems view on how to reduce the (achievement) gap and make all schools into great schools," Culton said. The leaders discuss the national agenda, international achievement data, and best practices in breakout sessions.

"The government is developing us as international leaders," she said. "Australia has been isolated, very parochial. We have had very egocentric ways. Now we're being encouraged to reach out, look at things globally."

Culton helped form a sister relationship between Serpell and a school in Singapore to learn more about that country's strategies for improving achievement. She and a school team spent 10 days in Singapore immersed in the culture and school practice, studying the other country's instructional practices while the team from Singapore wanted to learn from the Australians more about building student voice, creativity, and developing the whole student.

"All the principals in my network have traveled widely," she said.

RESULTS

Highlights of results from Australian students' performance on the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Thomson, et al., n.d.) show that as a na-

tion, Australia has some ways to go to catch the international leaders in student achievement. Forty-eight countries participated in the PIRLS, and 52 countries participated in TIMSS Year 4 exam and 45 in the Year 8 assessment. Yet Victoria had some successes:

- Students in Victoria scored significantly higher than students in most other Australian states on Year 4 math and reading. (Students in the Australian Capital Territory did better in reading and science.)
- In Year 8, Victorian students did significantly better than students in two of the seven other states in math and were comparable in science to all others except the Australian Capital Territory.

According to Elmore (2007), systemic change requires long-term commitment to transform the culture. "The Victorian improvement strategy has taken the most powerful ideas in good currency around school improvement and has put them into a coherent form that is distinctive and that defines the leading edge of improvement strategies internationally," he said. "Its primary focus is transforming the system by transforming its human capital. Everything else is instrumental.

"It is not about making schools more accountable for its own sake. It is about using accountability as a mechanism to support and improve practice. It is not about telling people in the field what to do. It is about setting overall expectations for performance and quality and putting the resources and supports behind those expectations," he said.

For Culton, out in the field, the viewpoint is even more focused. "We're trying to work out what we can do to improve opportunities for children," she said. "In the end, that's what it's all about. It's about giving children an edge that's going to help them be successful and confident and worthwhile, contributing members of society — to be the best they can be."

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THE POWER
of PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL

WITH AN INVESTMENT IN COLLABORATION, TEACHERS BECOME NATION BUILDERS

By Andrew Hargreaves and Michael Fullan

Professional capital has a fundamental connection to transforming teaching every day, and we've seen many examples of this at work in schools and school systems around the world. Here, we explore the powerful idea of capital and articulate its importance for professional work, professional capacity, and professional effectiveness. Systems that invest in professional capital recognize that education spending is an investment in developing human capital from early childhood to adulthood, leading to rewards of economic productivity and social cohesion in the next generation (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Professional capital requires attention not only to political and societal investments in education but also to leadership actions and educator needs, contributions, and career stages.

THE CONCEPT OF CAPITAL

Many teachers find the concept of capital a difficult idea because of where it comes from. Capital is not something we'd normally associate with teaching. The original idea of capital comes from the economic sector, and whether you are Warren Buffett or Adam Smith or Karl Marx, one part of the idea is basically the same. Capital is something that adds value to net worth. If you want to get a return, you need to make an investment.

TWO APPROACHES TO TEACHING

Right now, there are two visions for capital and how it can be used to improve teaching in the U.S. and elsewhere. One is a business capital approach. In this view, the purpose of public education is increasingly to yield a short-term profit with quick returns for its investors. The purpose of public education is to be a market for technology, for testing products, for charter schools and companies and chains and their look-alikes in Sweden and England and other parts of the world.

There's nothing wrong with business or making a profit. But when the overwhelming orientation of public education is to yield short-term profits in a fast market, it distorts fundamentally what it is that we do, and it carries troubling assumptions with it about teachers and teaching. One of the ways you increase the returns on public education in the short term is by reducing the cost of teaching, education's greatest expense.

In the business capital view, teaching is technically simple. Teaching doesn't require rigorous training, hard work in universities, or extensive practice in schools. In this view, teaching can be learned over six weeks in the summer, as long as you are passionate and enthusiastic. Imagine if we said that about our doctors or architects or engineers.

A business capital approach says that teaching can be driven by data, that data give you all the answers, that numbers and spreadsheets will set you free. This business capital view of teaching also says that technology can often replace teachers.

The opposite stance toward teaching is a professional capital approach. In this approach, teaching is hard. It's technically difficult, for example, knowing the signs of Asperger's, differentiating instruction, learning all the skills to deal with difficult adults. It requires technical knowledge, high levels of education, strong practice within schools, and continuous improvement over time that is undertaken collaboratively, and that calls for the development of wise judgment.

Over time, professional capital policies and practices build up the expertise of teachers individually and collectively to make a difference in the learning and achievement of all students. In a professional capital approach, teachers should and do work with technology to enhance teaching, but not where the mouse becomes a replacement for the teacher.

Our book spells out the three kinds of capital that comprise professional capital: human capital (the talent of individuals); social capital (the collaborative power of the group); and decisional capital (the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments about learners that are cultivated over many years). That's the vision of professional capital.

CAPITAL AT WORK

A simple but powerful study from Carrie Leana of the University of Pittsburgh helps to illustrate the idea of the relationship between human and social capital. She did a study in New York City with a sample of 130 elementary schools (Leana, 2011). She measured three things. She looked at human capital — the qualities of the individuals, their qualifications and competencies on paper. She measured social capital with questions like: To what extent do teachers in this school work in a trusting, collaborative way to focus on learning and the engagement and improvement of student achievement? And then she measured math achievement in September and June as an indicator of teachers' impact.

Leana found that schools with high social capital showed positive achievement outcomes. Schools with strong social and human capital together did even better. Most important, Leana found that teachers with low human capital who happened to be working in a school with higher social capital got better outcomes than those in schools with lower social capital. Being in a school around others who are working effectively rubs off on teachers and engages them.

Human and social capital are both important, but hu-

man capital is not as influential as social capital as a lead strategy. To enact change faster and more effectively, to reduce variation in effective teaching in a school or between and among schools in terms of networks, our advice is to use social capital. Use the group to change the group. This means developing how teachers as a team or group can best identify and respond to the needs of individual students. Back this up with the human capital that comes with being able to attract the best people in the profession, develop them as they come in, and build on that to be effective.

To attract people to the profession, you need a good set of schools for those people to work in. Continuous professional development pays off in Finland, Singapore, Alberta, and Ontario. The best way you can support and motivate teachers is to create the conditions where they can be effective day after day, together. And this isn't just about intraschool collaboration It's about interschool and interdistrict collaboration. It's about the whole profession.

DECISIONAL CAPITAL

We know that both human and social capital have links to student achievement. Decisional capital, a notion that comes from the field of law, is about how you develop your capabilities over time, particularly your capacity to judge. All professions involve judgment in situations and circumstances where the evidence and the answers aren't incontrovertibly clear.

Judges have to judge because the facts of the case do not speak

for themselves. How do judges learn to judge? By dealing with many cases over many years, by themselves, with other people, in the courtroom, out of the courtroom reflectively, alone introspectively, and collectively with their colleagues. This is what all professionals do. In part, Finland does so well in education because of the amount of time teachers spend in their day outside of the classroom. They spend less time in the classroom per day than any other country, which gives them time to reflect, discuss, and develop judgment.

THE ROLE OF CAREER STAGES

In teachers' development, we look at a couple of factors that bear on the development of decisional capital. One is commitment: How enthusiastic, how dedicated, how driven by a moral purpose are you as a teacher? The other is capability: How good are you, can you do the job, can you manage a class of kids, can you differentiate instruction? Both of these things are important, but one is often confused for the other.

There are three career stages that are critical in considering the development of decisional capital. In the early career — one to three years' experience — teachers are, on average, more enthusiastic than at any other point in their career. They are more committed, more dedicated. But, on average, they are less competent; there's still a lot to learn.

In the later years of teaching — 22 years and onwards — we see that teachers' commitment is, on average, declining. It has to do with many things — their lives, aging parents, experiences with change, principal turnover, etc. And their capabilities are all over the map.

The stereotype is that teachers late in their career are resisters, but, in fact, there are four types of teachers. There are the *renewed*, who are constantly learning and challenged. The *disenchanted* teachers were once very excited about change, but through negative experiences have become discouraged; however, they can be re-enchanted. Then there are the *quiet ones*. Introverts are more likely to work with two or three people rather than the entire school to make improvements, and that's the best way to work with them. The fourth group is the *resisters and reprobates.* These are the educators that those running performance evaluations often focus on, the deadwood to get out of the way. While there may be a few teachers in this category, don't confuse the other types of late-career teachers with them.

And then there are teachers in the mid-career range — with anywhere from four to 20 years' experience. These are, on average, the most committed and capable. Their time in teaching adds up to about 10,000 hours, which is the time that Malcolm Gladwell in *Outliers* tells us is how long it takes in any profession to become the equivalent of orchestra class as a musician (Gladwell, 2008). If you want to play in the pub on a Saturday night, it will take you about 4,000 hours, which is about the equivalent of three years of teaching.

In teaching, do we want to create teachers who are good

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enough to play in the pub on a Saturday night, with three years or so of experience? Or do we want to keep developing, to wire in all the skills and stretch the capacities, so educators reach that moment where they're in the zone, where they can improvise with a range of strategies effortlessly? If so, it takes most teachers an investment of around 10,000 hours to get to that point.

This career stage is important — and it's the one we commonly neglect. We focus on the first three years to get teachers going. And then we focus on the people who may sometimes prove difficult at the end. We think we can leave the people in the middle alone. If we leave them alone, though, there's the danger that things become too easy, that they won't stretch themselves. And then we're headed for a worrying end, and instead of quiet ones or disenchanted ones or especially renewed ones, we find ourselves dealing with reprobates — and we created them. We need to focus more on the teachers in the middle and to keep challenging and stretching them.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

In considering how to create a professional capital culture, it's critical to know that there isn't just one way to collaborate. Social capital is not only or sometimes even mainly about professional learning communities sitting down and looking at spreadsheets of student data together. Here are five examples from five countries that we've worked with that use social capital in different ways.

Finland: Local curriculum development

One of the things teachers do in Finland that makes them effective is that they create curriculum together, school by school, district by district. They don't just implement curriculum, they create curriculum together.

Singapore: Give away best ideas

Singapore is the highest-performing country on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and it's a place where people excel at every level. Here, educators give away their best ideas to other people. Think of that at a school — this notion makes educators have to keep inventing new ideas to stay ahead. They don't hog their ideas. How can you expect your teachers to collaborate if their schools compete?

Alberta: Collaborative innovation and inquiry

Alberta is one of the two highest-performing provinces in Canada. For the last 11 years, in collaboration with the government, the Alberta Teachers' Association has spent 50% of its resources on professional development. The College of Alberta School Superintendents has also worked cooperatively to promote inquiry and innovation in schools and districts. Professional inquiry fostered by leaders at all levels has become central to the development of the profession.

Ontario: Collective responsibility and transparency

When teachers look at data together in Ontario, they aren't just looking for quick fixes for how to lift up achievement scores. Behind every number is a child. Teachers sit together with the transparency of the data, and all teachers take collective responsibility for all children across grades. The teachers say, "They're our children," not "my children, my class." It's what's behind the data, not what's in the data that is most important for Ontario.

California Teachers Association: Teacher leaders drive system change

California is of the lowest-performing states in the U.S. Years ago, the California Teachers Association sued then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for several billion dollars. With the money that it won, the association collaboratively set up the Quality Education Investment Act for several hundred low-performing schools in the state. The early data indicate that with teachers as drivers of system change, achievement gains are being made, especially with Hispanic and African-American populations.

PUSH-PULL-NUDGE LEADS TO PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL

Professional capital is a function of the interactive, multiplicative combination of the three kinds of capital discussed above. With our responsibility to move professional capital forward, proactive action is necessary. A combination of push, pull, and nudge will move systems forward. We explore a range of actions for leaders to take in our book, but here is a quick overview of the push-pull-nudge idea.

Push is when you assert, pay attention, and intervene for more professional capital. When you push someone who is reluctant, they change, and they thank you afterwards. But you can be too pushy, and what started as a push for people's own good can turn into a shove that is enforcing compliance for its own sake. It can be your habitual first move, rather than your next or last one when other strategies fail. *Pull* is when you draw people into the excitement, into the vision, into the development. But not everyone is always ready to be pulled in this way. In between is nudging. *Nudge* is a way to enable people to make choices but to try and guide them a bit at a time into making better ones. Some of the ways to nudge people are: to use key language constantly that repeats and affirms what is important; to adopt tools like data walls that are visible to everyone, conceptual anchor charts in every classroom to emphasize key learning skills, or critical friends protocols to promote deeper discussion; or to change the structures by positioning a struggling new teacher alongside an experienced pro, rather than placing him or her out in a portable hut where no one else wants to teach.

All good leadership is a judicious mixture of push, pull, and nudge. This is a sophisticated practice. It's a combination of nonjudgmentalism, not being pejorative about where people are at the beginning, combined with moving them forward. In all this, there is a not a reluctance to insist on collaboration, but there is a sensitivity to career cycle issues and different starting points. In the end, it's best to pull whenever you can, push whenever you must, and nudge all the time.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we state in our book, "Professional capital is about enacting more equal, higher-attaining, more healthy countries in just about every way that counts. This is why successful countries treat their teachers as nation builders, and how they come to yield high returns in prosperity, social cohesion, and social justice," (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 185). But this can't be just a slogan. Our book has hit a responsive chord with educators at all levels of the system. Professional capital has turned out to be a "sticky concept" — it resonates with where people are and what they see as a promising and necessary solution. What we need now is a committed effort to implement this powerful conception of the profession across the system. The responsibility is ours. Let's make professional capital our primary investment.

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Photo by SEAN SMITH

Anthony Armstrong, publications editor at Learning Forward, explores the grounds outside Blarney Castle in Cork, Ireland. Armstrong recently visited Learning Forward member Maria Spring in Dublin.

AN AMERICAN
in DUBLIN

VISIT TO AN IRISH PRIMARY SCHOOL DEMONSTRATES LEARNING FORWARD'S INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

By Anthony Armstrong

S t. Clare's Primary School in Dublin, Ireland, is a small school, with 330 students and 22 teachers. Walking the hallways, it could be any U.S. school — halls lined with artwork and announcements; classes with busy walls and bright windows; and a friendly staff focused on their students' success.

I met Maria Spring, principal at St. Clare's and a member of Learning Forward, during a recent trip to Ireland.

Spring and I discussed the professional learning needs and concerns of Irish educators. Although the structure of the Irish school system is much different than in the U.S., the professional learning needs and challenges are very much the same.

IRELAND'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Of the 3,169 primary schools in Ireland, more than 2,800 are under the management of Catholic bishops, with the rest under the management of various religious and educational committees (Catholic Primary Schools Man-

agement Association, 2012, pp. 2-3). A board of management, which consists of four to eight members who serve four-year terms, manages each school. The boards are tasked with, among other responsibilities, ensuring that each school adequately meets the needs of all students and the needs of "personnel involved in management functions and staff development" (Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, 2012, p. 72).

In addition to boards of management oversight for school quality, the Irish school system uses inspectors to evaluate the quality of the schools and the teaching within the schools. The inspectors also publish reports on schools, assessments, and curriculum, and act as advisors to school communities and policymakers. These inspectors use a variety of models for school and teacher evaluation, including "whole-school evaluations, incidental inspections, and inspection of probationary teachers" (Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, 2012, p. 175).

"Inspectorates observe teachers, although the principal observes as well," said Spring. "The inspectorate looks at lesson plans, talks to children, gives feedback to principals, and makes recommendations. They report to central education centers and principals."

TEACHER LEARNING GROUPS

After the latest Program for International Student Assessment results, Irish schools started a national movement to improve their student results, said Spring. "We have always had staff development provided by educational centers, which are government-run and come out of the school's budget. But the learning is not very structured," she noted. "Teachers come back from inservice and share with other teachers. However, there is no implementation or ongoing support."

Spring is leading a change to more collaborative learning in her school by implementing teacher learning groups. "We look at assessments for gaps in learning, and then our teacher learning groups spend six to eight weeks targeting those gaps," she said.

St. Clare's teachers view collaboration as working together for the good of the children and see it as a hallmark of good practice, said Spring. She also does her best to encourage and model a culture of learning and sharing. "If the teachers see leadership sharing, it creates a culture of collaboration," said Spring. "If we are not learning and changing, then we are going backwards."

PRINCIPAL SUPPORT

For Spring's own learning, the Irish school system has a principal support network, called the Irish Primary Principal Network. The support network includes a website with a variety of online resources, email updates, listservs, a callback service for confidential support on the phone, a leadership publication, ongoing professional development events, and county network meetings. Principals use these resources to engage with professional learning, lectures, conferences, and collaborative opportunities in person and online.

Additionally, Spring uses her membership with Learning Forward to reach across borders to learn from her international counterparts. "I like Learning Forward's webinars and reading," said Spring. "It's refreshing to look at other schools and see new ideas. We have to broaden our worlds by learning from other countries."

After my visit, I reflected on the students I met and how they shared their lessons and sang a traditional Irish song for me. Seeing the reach of our work firsthand has helped me realize the powerful effect Learning Forward has on students and teachers around the world, and that is truly inspirational.

Spring uses her membership with Learning Forward to reach across borders to learn from her international counterparts.

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BLUEPRINT
for a LEARNING SYSTEM

CREATE ONE LARGER, MORE FLEXIBLE TEAM THAT ENCOURAGES COLLABORATION IN ALL DIRECTIONS

By Paul B. Ash and John D'Auria

P icture this: Teachers sharing insights and challenges. Principals leading with trust. Central office leaders inspiring and supporting principals. Educators regularly crafting innovative solutions to problems of practice. Students working collaboratively to solve problems that have relevance and meaning. A synergistic school system that results in all students learning at high levels.

Sadly, the vast majority of schools in the United States have not been able to reach these ideals. Most school dis-

tricts provide the best education their school systems are designed to produce. Every day, teachers and administrators come to work and do the best job they know how. In the book *School Systems That Learn* (Ash & D'Auria, 2013), we argue that most school systems, as they are currently designed, have reached or nearly reached the limits of their capacity and that systemic change is necessary to reach higher levels of learning for all students. To make this change possible, we have created a blueprint for building a systemwide learning organization that focuses on professional learning as the stimulus to improve student achievement.

Before diving into this problem, the following anal-

ogy may help explain what we mean by a system that has reached its maximum capacity.

Why can't a 6-year-old child run a four-minute mile? The human body is a system. Fundamentally, that biological system cannot convert food energy into usable energy fast enough and is not able to produce enough mechanical energy to run at great speeds, even if that energy were available. Even if this child ate just the right foods and exercised every day, he or she could never run a four-minute mile. The child's maximum speed is limited by his or her biology and physical structure.

The good news is that, unlike the body of the 6-year-old child, the maximum capacity of a school system is not limited by the laws of biology and physics. Rather, a school system's maximum capacity is a product of the structure and rules that were designed by humans. For example, in the 1900s, legislatures, school boards, and educational leaders set up the structure of schools based on a factory model of education. Students were sorted by age of manufacture and taught in batches of 40 to 50 students per class. At the time, no one expected schools to educate all students at high levels.

Now, society demands much higher levels of learning for all students, but many of the old structures have not changed. Teachers still work primarily by themselves in self-contained classrooms and rarely collaborate with other professionals. According to a *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher,* teachers spend an average of 2.7 hours per week in structured collaboration with other teachers and leaders (MetLife, 2010, p. 15). Given today's higher learning expectations for all students, it is unreasonable to expect that well-educated teachers can provide high levels of learning using a 100-year-old model, no matter how hard they work.

To expand the capacity of a school system to educate more students at high levels, schools must grow from a traditional model based on teachers working in isolation to a new model based on educator teams. In these teams, educators collaborate to develop lessons, write formative assessments, differentiate instruction, and create intervention strategies. By changing the structure from isolated teachers to teachers working in teams, school leaders can increase the capacity of their schools to educate more students more effectively without adding personnel.

However, the team structure also has a maximum capacity. Even more can be accomplished if school systems shift from small, isolated teams to an entire K-12 learning school system that functions as one larger, more flexible team that encourages all teachers and administrators to collaborate in all directions.

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CREATING A LEARNING SYSTEM

As practitioners with 60 years of combined school administration experience, we have found no evidence that any teacher gets up in the morning and says, "I can't wait for more rules, regulations, and standardization — they inspire me to work hard and find new ways to teach all students at high levels!"

In 2009, Ronald Wolk, former editor of *Education Week*, criticized the level of standardization in American schools. He wrote, "Standardization and uniformity may work with cars and computers, but it doesn't work with

humans. Today's student body is the most diverse in history. An education system that treats all students alike denies that reality" (Wolk, 2009, p. 30).

Student educational needs are complex and changing, which means that educators must constantly challenge themselves to learn new ways to reach students.

We have created a model to improve learning for all students by expanding the collective potency of educator talents throughout an entire K-12 school system, including central office administrators working with all school-based educators. The model is based on four high-leverage drivers that will dramatically change the culture throughout a school system and lead to better solutions for all students on a daily basis. These four drivers are:

- Trust;
- Collaboration in all directions, elevating the importance of teamwork;
- Capacity building for all educators; and
- Leaders at all levels.

Here is an overview of the four drivers and how they work together to increase the quality of teaching and learning.

TRUST

When a climate of trust exists, you can feel it. You know that your colleagues and supervisors care about your success and will do whatever they can to help you succeed. According to researchers Michelle Reina and Dennis Reina, founders of the Reina Trust Building Institute, "Without trust, employees have little interest in being creative, taking risks, and collaborating. The generative power begins to wane, and performance is diminished" (Reina & Reina, 2007, p. 36).

Educational researchers Bryk and Schneider found a strong correlation in schools between high levels of trust and student performance. They examined 100 schools between 1991 and 1996 and found that the schools in the top quartile for standardized test scores had higher trusting relationships, as measured by faculty surveys, than schools in the bottom quartile (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). While correlation does not mean causation, our experience bears out this commonsense conclusion. When faculty members trust one another, they are much more likely to work together to improve both teaching and learning.

Leaders in a learning system can build trust by:

1. Genuinely caring about teachers' professional growth and

> **When a climate of trust exists, you can feel it.**

COLLABORATION IN ALL DIRECTIONS
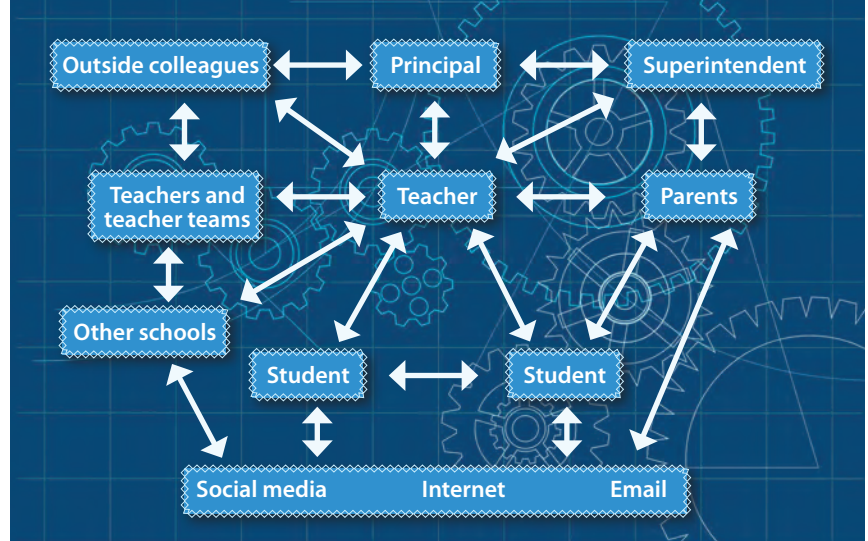
success in the classroom;
2. Modeling vulnerability and demonstrating openness to continuous learning;
3. Working with teachers through conflict to achieve common goals; and
4. Demonstrating a willingness to make unpopular political decisions that address student needs.

While school systems without trust can produce successes and have programs that are exemplary, trust is one of the four drivers that sustains continual growth. It provides a safety net that supports ongoing experimentation and research. Trust also increases the system's capacity to address unanticipated problems and obstacles that arise from the inevitable misunderstanding and conflicts that are part of complex communities. Trust is necessary for the system to achieve beyond its current capacity. Most importantly, trust provides the psychological safety that educators need to take risks and create ventures that lead to breakthrough ideas. Our current national emphasis on accountability, while necessary, is not sufficient to generate continuous innovation and high achievement for all students.

COLLABORATION IN ALL DIRECTIONS, ELEVATING THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

Many books focus on the impact of individual collaborative teams within schools, sometimes known as professional learning communities, but we argue that isolated learning communities are only the first step to form a school or system learning organization. In a larger learning organization, teachers and administrators must collaborate in all directions to raise the capacity of all educators to effectively educate students. (See diagram above.) Collaboration in all directions means that, within each school and

throughout the district, every educator collaborates with others consistently to develop more effective educational approaches.

Studies show that U.S. teachers strongly support greater collaboration in schools. In 2009, MetLife conducted a study of 1,003 public school teachers and 500 principals in grades K-12. Survey results showed 67% of teachers and 78% of principals think that greater collaboration among teachers and school leaders would have a major impact on improving student achievement (MetLife, 2010, p. 9). In a 2010 survey of 40,000 teachers conducted by Scholastic and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 86% of teachers identified a collegial work environment as "absolutely essential" or "very important" for their persistence in the profession (Scholastic & Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010, p. 70).

Given that changing any large institution is difficult, why should school leaders direct the change to increase collaboration in schools? Research shows that educators throughout the U.S. feel that more collaboration will increase collegial trust, job satisfaction, teacher success in the classroom, and student responsibility (MetLife, 2010; Fullan, 1993; Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010). Amy Edmondson from Harvard Business School says that collegial teamwork is the linchpin of innovation (Edmonson, 2012). Yet for all its potential benefits, collaboration is challenging and requires considerable skill building, which is why our third driver is linked to continuous capacity building.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ALL EDUCATORS

If the goal is high achievement for all students, then we need to change how we increase educator capacity. Traditional approaches include:

1. Firing or not rehiring ineffective teachers, and hiring better teachers;
2. Supervision and evaluation to improve classroom instruction; and
3. Professional development, which is often a one-day workshop, or relying on teachers to complete graduate courses.

While these approaches have some merit, there is weak evidence that they produce sufficient school and system capacity to close achievement gaps and provide high-quality learning for all students.

In a learning organization, the entire school system must be designed to promote continuous adult learning that is likely to increase student learning. To expand capacity beyond the traditional approach, we recommend that school leaders create a robust system of professional learning that builds on and shares internal knowledge and skills and reaches out to the external world when needed.

We suggest that all school leaders start by creating a K-12 professional learning committee comprised of teachers and administrators throughout the system. In our model, the committee would oversee development of in-district courses and multiday workshops that are aligned with school and district learning goals. The development process would include identifying what skills and knowledge teachers need to learn at a deeper level to more effectively raise student achievement.

While the K-12 professional learning committee plays an important organizational role in the district, the day-to-day work of educators in schools must also produce continuous adult learning, formally and informally. For example, we recommend educators form study groups to share best practices, and principals and department heads use faculty meetings to build community and to improve adult and student learning. School leaders should create after-school professional learning that is aligned with school and district needs.

According to researcher John Hattie, "The biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching" (Hattie, 2009, p. 22).

We recommend these capacity-building strategies:

1. Promote conversations between and among colleagues (planned or unplanned) that allow teachers to share knowledge and to innovate;
2. Ensure that approved courses and workshops are aligned with school and district goals;
3. Use the hiring process to increase department and school capacity; and
4. Promote a culture that embraces professional feedback as a lifelong process to improve practice.

Providing high-quality professional learning is hard work and must become a core value of the district over time. There are no quick fixes to change and improve professional practice. An effective system of professional learning must be coherent, consistent, systemic, and sustained.

LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

A major problem with top-down leadership is compliance. According to Peter Senge, "When genuine commitment is needed, hierarchical authority becomes problematic. … No one can force another person to learn if the learning involves deep changes in beliefs and attitudes and fundamental new ways of thinking and acting" (Senge, 1996, p. 43).

In a learning system, everyone can contribute to and advocate for change. Everyone can provide leadership within his or her work group to implement the new plan. In a K-12 learning system, all faculty members and support staff are encouraged to take on leadership roles either formally, in a part-time position beyond their regular duties, or informally, without a title, on an as-needed basis with peer colleagues.

To break through the current limitations of schools, administrators need to shift their leadership from "I" to "we" and

> In a larger learning organization, teachers and administrators must collaborate in all directions to raise the capacity of all educators to effectively educate students.

promote a constant flow of new ideas and inventive thinking from everyone. Effective school leaders in a learning organization must encourage and validate creative problem solving and support educators who try new ideas and take risks. It is unrealistic to expect that many teachers will analyze current school or classroom practices and recommend new approaches without support from school leaders.

Schools must also become laboratories for new knowledge. Teachers need to use their classrooms as laboratories to examine student learning and develop more effective interventions. According to Hattie, "School leaders and teachers need to create schools, staff rooms, and classroom environments in which error is welcomed as a learning opportunity, in which discarding incorrect knowledge and understanding is welcomed, and in which teachers can feel safe to learn, relearn, and explore knowledge and understanding" (Hattie, 2009, p. 9).

In a learning system, everyone can find his or her passion to improve student learning. Some educators will chose formal leadership positions, while others may choose to lead their teacher team or lead a district committee. Expanding leadership development is one way districts can expand their capacity to bring teams of educators together to solve complex educational problems.

While there are many factors that contribute to effective schools, creating a school system that learns is the most effective way to improve student learning. Changes in laws, teacher evaluation processes, and school structures are insufficient to increase learning to high levels for all students. Ultimately, what matters most is creating a learning system that results in everyone learning at high levels every day.

School Systems That Learn: Improving Professional Practice, Overcoming Limitations, and Diffusing Innovation
Paul B. Ash & John D'Auria

This practitioner's guide to creating a systemwide learning organization focuses on professional learning as the stimulus to improving student achievement. *Corwin Press & Learning Forward, 2013*
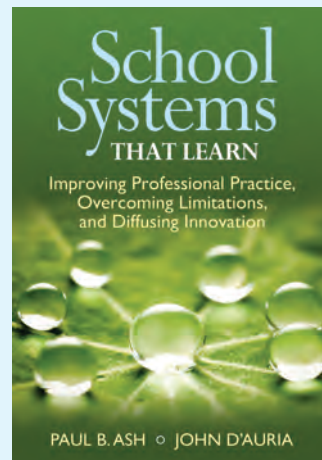
Available in the Learning Forward Bookstore: **http://store.learningforward.org.**

Paul B. Ash, co-author of *School Systems That Learn*, hosted a two-part webinar exploring how leaders can create cultures of innovation and curiosity in their schools. Watch the archive of these webinars at **www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars.**

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PAVE *the* WAY
for COACHES

**PRINCIPAL'S ACTIONS ARE KEY
TO SHAPING ROLES
AND RELATIONSHIPS**

By Sally F. Heineke and Barbara Polnick

Instructional coaching can make the difference in whether teachers implement best practices (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). However, our experiences in various coaching and administrative roles as well as our research with literary coaches has shown that the relationship with and support of the administration, especially the building principal, is essential for coaches to be successful in their leadership role.

Developing trusting relationships and credibility with teachers in a new school can be a daunting challenge for instructional coaches. One coach spoke candidly about the icy environment that greeted her: "The first year, I was treated like I worked for the IRS."

This reading coach stayed the course and focused her efforts with teachers who were most receptive, the 1st-grade team. Within one year, test scores revealed significant improvement in reading fluency among 1st-grade students.

The reading coach noted that this success would have been impossible without her principal's help. "She stood behind everything," the coach said. "I hung in there because of the principal."

Both the loneliness of the position and unwillingness of some teachers to try new strategies for improvement can create a hostile environment for instructional coaches. The principal is key in helping the instructional coach get a foot in the door by establishing a climate for professional growth and expectations for success in classrooms that embrace change.

WHY COACHING MATTERS

Schools are being held increasingly accountable for improving student achievement. Research shows that teacher quality is the variable most strongly related to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Tivnan & Hamphill, 2005).

Because of this, administrators are seeking high-quality professional learning for their teachers.

A number of studies describe the effective role coaching can play in professional learning to increase student achievement (e.g. Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010; Sailors & Price, 2010). Instructional coaches provide leadership in developing learning communities and support for teachers' growth toward professional learning goals. Instructional coaching aligns with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011). For these reasons, administrators are hiring instructional coaches to work with their faculty.

THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE

In our experiences in schools, we have witnessed administrators, especially building principals, exert a strong influence on the quality and effectiveness of the coaching that tran-

For principals who want to see sustained student growth through improved teaching, we offer these five recommendations for supporting and maximizing the role of an instructional coach.

1. Define the coach's role.

2. Publicize the coach's role.

3. Guard the coach's role — the coach is not an evaluator.

4. Facilitate collaboration.

5. Hire prepared instructional coaches.

TEAM COACHING TOOL: See p. 52 for an example of team coaching, which increases the impact of coaching so that more teachers benefit.

spires within their school. In a study of the impact coaching had in 116 high-poverty schools (Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010), leadership support for coaching provided the highest number of significant relationships between coaching and classroom instruction. Conversely, another study found that a lack of principal support was one of the most common obstacles to coaching (Richard, 2003).

Although instructional coaches are found in schools across the country, principals may not know how to best support their work and may not be familiar with the literature on coaching. Here are five ways administrators can best support the work of instructional coaches in their schools.

1 DEFINE THE COACH'S ROLE.

The administrator and instructional coach should work together to clearly define the role of the coach. Smith (2007) found that when ad-ministrators splinter the coach's role into multiple responsibilities, the coach loses effectiveness in facilitating teacher learning.

While working as a regional coach trainer, co-author Sally Heineke found that many literacy coaches had been assigned a wide variety of roles and responsibilities, such as administering or overseeing the administration of assessments for all students in the school, overseeing the school's reading intervention program, providing instruction for students who struggled with reading or writing, overseeing schoolwide motivational programs, planning for and supervising summer school programs for children, writing grants for resources, overseeing curriculum resources for teachers to check out, entering test data into a schoolwide database, implementing home-school programs, and on and on. The coaches who had been assigned the widest array of responsibilities did the least amount of

instructional coaching.

Instructional coaching can be difficult, and coaches may drift toward other assigned responsibilities rather than tackling the more challenging role of collaborating with teachers. The top priority of instructional coaches should be to facilitate teacher learning that will translate into greater student learning. When the focus of instructional coaching is fractured, meeting professional learning goals becomes doubtful, so clearly defining the coaching role and supporting that work is a necessary first step.

2 PUBLICIZE THE COACH'S ROLE.

School administrators must make clear to faculty the parameters of the instructional coach's role and responsibilities. We have seen too many administrators who have abdicated this administrative task, expecting the coach to explain his or her role to the faculty. Consequently, in our experience, teachers step into the vacuum left by passive administrators and exert their own influence in shaping the coach's role.

> **Organizational decisions made by administrators must provide the climate, time, and opportunities for teachers and coaches to work together — growing, learning, and problem solving.**

Although this may not seem negative, having teachers dictate the coach's schedule has sometimes resulted in the coach being pulled to and fro doing whatever teachers deem to be most expedient and helpful to them. For instance, coaches may be asked to take children from the classroom for intervention in order to relieve the classroom teacher of the responsibility of providing additional help for these students.

We have also seen coaches asked to run copies, laminate materials, and prepare materials for centers. Allocating the coach's time in ways that take the coach away from his or her professional learning role can be avoided if the building administrator clearly defines, publicizes, and frequently recognizes the coach's role, responsibilities, and work.

3 GUARD THE COACH'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

As principal and coach work together to outline the parameters of the coach's work, it is also important to keep in mind that the coach should never be viewed as a staff evaluator. Teachers and coaches stress that gaining and maintaining trusting relationships with teachers is a necessary foundation for instructional coaching (Heineke, 2010). For coaching to be successful, coaching relationships must be safe, confidential, and nonevaluative (Burkins, 2007; Dozier, 2006).

Teachers say that it is important that coaches be seen as being in the trenches with them, not evaluating their performance. Teachers need to feel free to open up and share with the coach their own weaknesses and learning needs without being fearful that everything they say or do will go straight back to the prin-

cipal or other administrator.

Principals needs to make it clear to coaches that they do not expect or want coaches to evaluate teachers and that the coach's role is to collaborate and problem solve with teachers, supporting and scaffolding teacher learning. Administrators must be proactive in guarding against doing anything that would lead teachers to view an instructional coach as another evaluator.

4 FACILITATE COLLABORATION.

Principals need to support coaches in developing a schedule that provides time for teachers and coaches to collaborate within the school day. Steckel (2009) found that, for coaches to make an impact, administrators must facilitate a school culture that values inquiry and adult learning. So principals need to set aside time on the schedule for coaches to meet with grade-level or content-specific teams.

We have observed principals of high-performing schools who scheduled collaborative meetings during conference periods scheduled back-to-back with times when the classroom teacher is not in charge of his or her students, such as lunch, art, music, computer, physical education, or other special classes. Principals have also used professional learning dollars to bring in substitute teachers periodically to provide time for extended collaboration.

These collaborative meetings can serve a variety of purposes, such as examining student data and student work to drive instructional changes or to engage in a study of a professional book or other literature that meets teachers' needs. After laying the groundwork in these collaborative settings, the coach can follow up with classroom coaching as teachers implement the ideas and instructional practices they discussed in their collaborative meetings.

Organizational decisions made by administrators must provide the climate, time, and opportunities for teachers and coaches to work together — growing, learning, and problem solving.

5 HIRE PREPARED COACHES.

Credibility with the faculty will be difficult to obtain if the coach does not have the necessary expertise. Instructional coaches need to have leadership skills, coaching skills, and expertise in the focused subject areas as they coach teachers.

Can you imagine transitioning a classroom teacher into the role of school counselor, media specialist, or assistant principal without that teacher having prepared for such a role? Yet across the country, teachers have been moved from the classroom into the very challenging job of instructional coach with little or no preparation.

The Standards for Reading Specialists/Literacy Coach issued through the International Reading Association (2010) recommend that reading and literacy coaches should have previous teaching experience and a master's degree with a concentration in reading and writing education. Furthermore, the master's

program for instructional coaches should include courses that develop expertise in leadership and coaching teachers as well as working with children, necessitating a supervised practicum experience.

Four coaches with whom Heineke had previously worked as a reading coach trainer volunteered for a research project on coaching. Heineke (2010) found that two coaches who had obtained reading credentials (a master's degree in reading and a reading specialist certification) were far more successful in their role of coaching than were the two teachers who assumed the role without specialized training.

Teachers who worked with the two credentialed coaches talked about their coach's knowledge of reading acquisition and instruction and viewed these coaches as valuable resources. They readily listed many of their own instructional practices that had been heavily influenced by the work of these literacy coaches.

On the other hand, although the teachers who discussed the noncredentialed coaches spoke positively about their relationship, they identified very few instructional practices that had been influenced by their literacy coaches. In fact, one teacher stated that she had not learned anything from working with her literacy coach.

While the coaches and teachers in this study were limited in number and other factors may have played into these findings, the words of one of the noncredentialed coaches underscores the difficulty of undertaking such challenging responsibilities without the necessary preparation: "I'm not very far removed from the classroom, and I never had a supportive reading coach. I really did not understand the concept of a reading coach. And I'm not sure I do now."

For two years, this reading coach had put forth her best effort to fulfill her new role, yet she was still struggling to even understand the parameters of her responsibilities and how she should go about accomplishing them. Administrators need to acknowledge instructional coaching as a specialized field and hire professionals who have prepared to undertake the challenges the role demands.

As administrators step up to the plate and provide these kinds of support for instructional coaching, they will ensure that the money and time invested in professional learning will pay off with greater dividends in sustained teacher growth and student achievement.

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TEAM COACHING:

Here's the situation

The benefits of team coaching include exponentially increasing the impact of coaching so that more teachers benefit from the coaching provided. In addition, team coaching supports group maturity, more rapid growth and development, innovation, teachers' confidence, and teacher capacity.
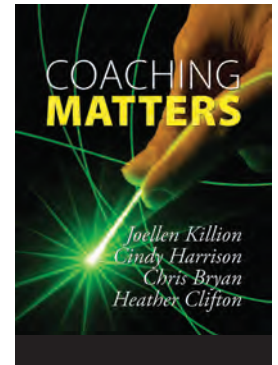
With team coaching, group members commit to their own growth and that of other members. Individual members know that they are supported by the group and that they are not alone in facing the challenges or striving for the goals they seek to reach. That sense of support often enhances their willingness to step out of their comfort zone. The nonevaluative nature of interactions within team coaching provides teachers with a safe place to take risks.

Try this tool as a protocol for teams wanting to support one member addressing an issue, putting themselves in their colleague's shoes.

Coaching Matters, by Joellen Killion, Cindy Harrison, Chris Bryan, and Heather Clifton, reveals how coaching can make a difference. Each chapter describes an element of what research and the authors' experiences show it takes to make coaching effective. This tool is one of many that supplement the content of the book. Buy the book at **http://store.learningforward.org.** The book is available for $45 for nonmembers, $36 for members. *Learning Forward, 2012*

Purpose:	To generate multiple ideas from a team to support an individual facing a challenge in his or her professional practice while leaving the decision making to the individual. (The coach will find it important to stress possibilities rather than give advice.)
Materials:	Chart paper, markers.
Time:	Approximately 1 hour per situation, depending on team size.

BEFORE THE COACHING SESSION		TIME
1	Invite team members to present a situation to the team. Identify one person from among the volunteers, or schedule all volunteers to present over a series of meetings. After identifying the volunteer(s), use the questions here to guide the volunteer so he or she is ready to describe a situation to the team. Guidelines might include:	
2	Present a description of the situation, answering: a. What is it? b. Who is involved? c. What does it affect? d. How do I feel about it? e. What goal(s) am I striving to achieve?	5 minutes

AT THE COACHING SESSION		TIME
1	Introduce the protocol and set norms for the team's work. Suggested norms might be: • Participate actively. • Be open to multiple, different ways of approaching the situation. • Engage in divergent thinking. • Acknowledge that each individual should choose the approach that is best for his or her situation. • Accept all ideas. • Refrain from critiquing ideas. • Speak from own experience.	5 minutes
2	Ask the presenter to describe the situation while team members listen carefully.	5 minutes
3	Have team members identify in a round-robin fashion what their goal(s) would be if this were their situation.	3 minutes
4	Have the presenter describe related factors he or she is considering while team members listen carefully.	2 minutes
5	Have team members share what they would think about this situation if it were theirs.	5 minutes
6	Have team members shift gears and share possible strategies, along with their reasons for suggesting a strategy. Members should suggest only one strategy at a time, allowing other members to offer ideas. One team member can record the ideas and rationales, perhaps on a chart so all can see them. The presenter should listen carefully to each idea. The group should not discuss or criticize any ideas.	15 minutes
7	Ask team members to pause to choose the idea that they might use given their current understanding of the situation and to report out, in turn, their selection and rationale.	7 minutes
8	Ask the presenter to share his or her choice and rationale.	3 minutes
9	Involve all members in discussing what they learned from the experience.	10 minutes

Source: Killion, J., Harrison, C., Bryan, C., & Clifton, H. (2012). *Coaching matters.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Keeping the focus on student learning requires confrontational conversations

If a problem exists, it exists whether we talk about it or not. In fact, things will likely get worse. Why, then, do so many of us talk about the problem, but with the wrong person? We triangulate. That's when person A bonds with person B over their mutual loathing of person C, who often remains blissfully unaware of the drama. Robin Totten decided that there must be no more triangulating, no more truth-telling squeamishness in her school. Here's how she did it.

— *Susan Scott*

By Robin Totten

Schools exist to help every child prepare for college, careers, and life. To make this happen, schools must keep the focus on high-quality instruction for every child. Robert Marzano (2003) suggests that, in addition to a planned and viable curriculum, staff collaboration is a leading factor in helping schools succeed. Unaddressed adult issues can take our focus off of what's best for children.

I have seen firsthand that schools cannot help kids learn until the adults can function like a team. As a new principal, I decided that my first days and weeks would focus on building relationships with and between staff members. We collaboratively developed and then published group norms and explicitly

Totten

defined how we would make good decisions together. We did team-building exercises about unity, respect, trust, empowerment, accountability, and strategies for good communication.

I thought we were off to a good start. We made improvements in curriculum, instruction, and assessment of student learning. However, it is hard to sustain change and momentum without the school culture to support it.

ADDRESS THE ISSUES

Susan Scott says relationships and organizations succeed or fail "gradually, then suddenly, one conversation at a time" (Scott, 2002). This was true at our school. During my first month, I noticed problems people knew and gossiped about but had chosen not to address. I gathered my courage, reminding myself that schools were for children, and began to address the issues.

Staff members began to see I was willing to take on tough issues. They

started to talk about how they felt pushed around and mistreated by colleagues.

Younger staff members kept quiet in meetings because they feared retaliation from peers. Teachers could identify peers they didn't wanted to teach with due to poor classroom management. They knew of classrooms they wouldn't want their own child in but didn't want to talk to the person about it. A school board member said the school culture problem had gone on for more than a decade, and former principals had left rather than confront the situation. A review of district staff surveys verified this.

I worked alongside many hard-working teachers and staff trying to keep the focus on kids and student achievement. However, by the end of my third year, we remained a staff divided. People were being asked if they were on my side or the other side. While I continued to say there was only one

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side, gossip and accusations increased.

Good teachers started making plans to leave. The new teachers union president felt pressured to promote an anonymous survey, which neither she nor I thought would solve the problem. People shut their classroom doors, and student achievement began to stagnate. I considered leaving, too, but decided to stay and fight for the kids, the staff, and our community.

At individual year-end conferences with staff, I asked what I could do as their school leader to improve our school. The message was clear: Help staff learn strategies to confront others in safe, productive ways, and do whatever it takes to solve the problem.

LEARN STRATEGIES

The superintendent and I arranged for the whole staff to engage in professional learning over four afternoons in the fall. At the first meeting, people were so nervous they hardly talked. The facilitator taught us that a conversation is not about a relationship. The conversation *is* the relationship. We left mulling over the idea that, in a true conversation, everyone is equal. We engaged in small-group conversations that helped to surface some of our unaddressed issues.

I admired the superintendent's courageous leadership as she modeled effective conversations. She hosted a meeting that included varied perspectives on our school challenges: teacher, union president, school board member, and principal. Out of this conversation came the next action steps. We agreed that an anonymous survey wasn't the answer.

Next, she facilitated conversations with staff. Through this process, staff members began to speak out. At times, participants' actions and nonverbal behaviors were as much a part of the conversation as their words. It became clear who was working for the team and for kids and who wasn't. The superintendent and I determined to

tackle the toughest challenge first. This required some hard personnel decisions. Other members of the school team began to try effective conversation strategies with peers.

At one of our final meetings came a turning point. We had been afraid to have difficult conversations with each other because we thought it was kinder to ignore problems, deny them, and hope they went away. In reality, that made the problems worse. We listed our worst fears about speaking up and found they didn't outweigh the challenges we faced by continuing to overlook the problems.

The session leader asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high, how much do you prefer that people confront you when they have a concern?" She asked individuals to stand up for the number that represented them in that scale. The huge majority stood up for numbers seven through 10.

Then she asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high, how often do you use confrontation when there is a challenge with others?" This time, only three people stood up for numbers seven through 10. It was obvious — we preferred people speak up and tell us what we needed to hear but, as a group, we weren't courageous enough to do it. Then we learned a strategy for planning productive confrontational conversations.

REBUILD SCHOOL CULTURE

We started rebuilding our school culture and learning to make difficult conversations a daily practice. Staff members started to speak up, and student achievement rose. Student learning once again became the focus. Now, our conversations are more about instruction and less about each other.

Recently, we began a five-day protocol. If a person has a concern or challenge with someone, he or she has five days to talk to the person; brainstorm or talk the problem out

with a friend, then go to the person or take the friend along to have the conversation; or drop it and stop talking about it to others.

Here's what we learned: Leaders can't shy away from tough challenges, interpersonal or otherwise. Don't give up. Gather many perspectives to help tackle tough challenges. I've grown as a leader by not quitting when it was tempting to do so. I've learned not to handle people's interpersonal problems for them. If I do, it robs them of a learning opportunity.

Though our conversational strategies are becoming more second nature, I still write out the first 60 seconds of a tough conversation in advance so that my invitation to talk about the topic is clear and compelling, increasing the chance for success. As supervisors, we often think we are doing our job to have the tough conversations, but we don't have them in a way that gets the other person to buy in. These one-sided conversations do not enrich relationships or provoke learning.

Keeping the focus on student learning requires confrontational conversations. To have these, people need to feel safe, gather their courage, and know some strategies. They also need formal and informal leaders at every level who believe that good relationships are worth fighting for in order to focus on students' educational and emotional needs.

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Marzano, R. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Scott, S. (2002). *Fierce conversations: Achieving success at work & in life, one conversation at a time.* New York, NY: Penguin.

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Robin Totten (tottenr@orting.wednet.edu) is principal of Orting (Wash.) Primary School. ■

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:
What professional learning looks like
around the world.
By Lois Brown Easton

A survey of teachers in 24 countries reported that 89% engaged in professional learning in an 18-month period — which means 11% reported no professional learning during that time. Data show us the types of learning teachers engage in, the impact of the learning, and barriers to creating effective professional learning experiences. What the data make clear is that, despite everything we know about the need for high-quality professional learning, a significant number of teachers around the world aren't getting what they need or want. Data snapshots offer a glimpse into the education context and professional learning practices in seven countries.

A WORLD OF IDEAS:
International survey gives a voice to teachers everywhere.
By Tracy Crow

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) gathers professional learning insights from around the world on topics including classroom practice, professional learning communities, and self-efficacy. While teachers' needs varied depending on their level of experience, the majority of all teachers reported wanting more professional development. *Q&A with Kristen Weatherby.*

TECHNOLOGY CLOSES THE DISTANCE:
Global solutions show the variety, equity, and accessibility of distance learning options.
By Mary Burns

Education Development Center researched distance-based teacher professional learning in nearly 100 countries and found five common elements: diverse technologies, personalized learning, classroom-based delivery, mobility, and social media networks. For teachers in the U.S., these elements demonstrate how technology can deliver the types of learning teachers say they want, with activities that focus on teachers as learners.

VICTORIA'S LEADING EDGE:
Australian state puts human capital at the heart of its improvement plans.
By Valerie von Frank

Victoria's blueprint for improving education is to invest in educators' professional learning and benchmark student achievement against the highest-performing nations in the world. Data-driven accountability, research-based professional learning, and leadership development are part of Victoria's change model. Its efforts led Richard Elmore to say that the state "is on the leading edge of policy and practice in the world."

THE POWER OF PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL:
With an investment in collaboration, teachers become nation builders.
By Andrew Hargreaves and Michael Fullan

Professional capital has a fundamental connection to transforming teaching every day. The authors explore the powerful idea of capital and articulate its importance for professional work, professional capacity, and professional effectiveness. Systems that invest in professional capital recognize that education spending is an investment in developing human capital from early childhood to adulthood, leading to rewards of economic productivity and social cohesion in the next generation.

AN AMERICAN IN DUBLIN:
Visit to an Irish primary school demonstrates Learning Forward's international impact.
By Anthony Armstrong

During a trip to Ireland, Learning Forward publications editor Anthony Armstrong visited St. Clare's Primary School in Dublin, where the principal, Maria Spring, is a Learning Forward member. Armstrong discovered that, although the structure of the Irish school system is much different than in the U.S., the professional learning needs and challenges are very much the same.

features
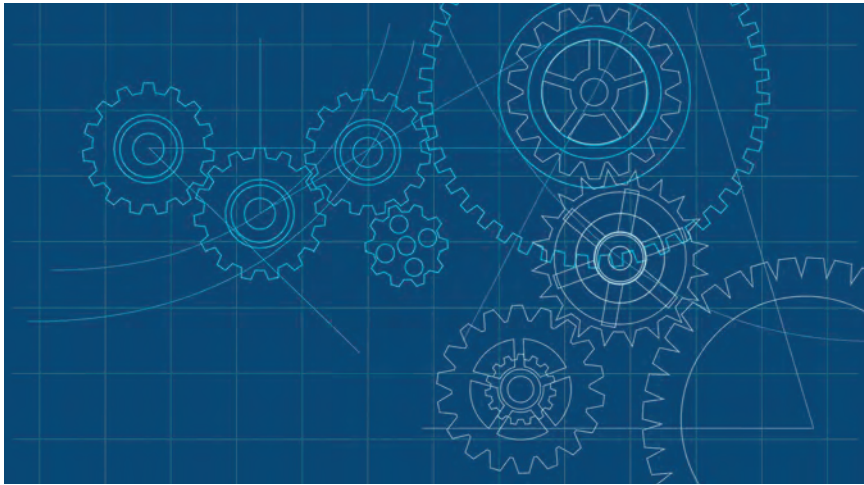
BLUEPRINT FOR A LEARNING SYSTEM:
Create one larger, more flexible team that encourages collaboration in all directions.
By Paul B. Ash and John D'Auria

To expand the capacity of a school system to educate more students at high levels, schools must grow from a traditional model based on teachers working in isolation to a new model based on educator teams. Even more can be accomplished if school systems shift from small, isolated teams to an entire K-12 learning school system. Four high-leverage drivers can dramatically change the culture throughout a school system and lead to better solutions for all students on a daily basis: trust, collaboration, capacity building, and leadership.

PAVE THE WAY FOR COACHES:
Principal's actions are key to shaping roles and relationships.
By Sally F. Heineke and Barbara Polnick

Developing trusting relationships and credibility with teachers in a new school can be a daunting challenge for instructional coaches. Both the loneliness of the position and unwillingness of some teachers to try new strategies for improvement can create a hostile environment. The principal is key in helping the instructional coach get a foot in the door by establishing a climate for professional growth and expectations for success in classrooms that embrace change.

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Keeping the focus on student learning requires confrontational conversations.
By Susan Scott and Robin Totten

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From the director:
Learning Forward looks beyond North America's borders.
By Stephanie Hirsh

A new agenda calls for Learning Forward to grow as an international organization.

coming up
in August 2013 *JSD*:

IMPLEMENTING COMMON CORE

Writing for JSD

- Themes for the 2014 publication year are posted at **www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes.**

- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure (christy.colclasure@learningforward.org).

- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at **www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines.**

From left: Principal Rachel Blundell and teachers Casey Kimball, Alana Carlisle, Glenn Sikes, and Keshani Pathirage are members of Santa Fe Junior High's 8th-grade math team.

Texas math team wins Shirley Hord Award

The 8th-grade math team at Santa Fe Junior High School in Santa Fe, Texas, is the winner of the Shirley Hord Learning Team Award. This award is given to a team of teachers that demonstrates Learning Forward's definition of professional learning in action.

To view the video submission of the winning team and learn more about the award, visit
www.learningforward.org/get-involved/awards/2013-hord-award-winner.

Ten teams from schools across the United States submitted nominations. Each school submitted a video and documentation as evidence of its professional learning work.

"All of our learning teams have been using job-embedded professional learning tools to identify specific student challenges and have set goals that will raise our students' achievement levels," said Rachel Blundell, principal of Santa Fe Junior High. "The 8th-grade math team is one great example of that ongoing work."

Through an analysis of data from student achievement tests, walk-throughs, and teacher observations, the team identified their problem of practice and outlined specific goals. The team has developed instructional strategies and uses meeting time to discuss successes and challenges. The learning team includes teachers, Blundell, and an instructional coach and curriculum specialist.

"The 8th-grade math team at Santa Fe Junior High exemplifies collective commitment to student learning," said Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward's executive director. "We know that collaborative learning, when it includes critical elements of our definition and standards, leads to increased student achievement. This award honors the research Shirley Hord has conducted on the attributes and effects of successful professional learning communities."

The award includes funds to support three representatives of the winning team from Santa Fe Junior High to participate in Learning Forward's 2013 Summer Conference. The winning school will also receive $2,500 to support collaborative professional learning and a gift of Corwin books for the school's professional library.

International influences help us prepare students for a changing world

on board
JEFF RONNEBERG

In *That Used to Be Us,* Thomas Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum (2011) wrote, "In the span of a decade, people in Boston, Bangkok, and Bangalore, Mumbai, Manhattan, and Moscow, all became virtual next-door neighbors."

This influence of technology and globalization is something we are all experiencing, even though we may not realize it. For example, the iPhone was released in 2007, the iPad in 2010. In less than a decade, the expansion of these and similar technologies has significantly changed how we work and interact with people we can now "see" around the world.

What does this mean for education? Today's students will be working in the global marketplace. How are we preparing them for this ever-changing future? How are we learning from educators around the world? How are we preparing our educators?

Learning Forward has been purposefully expanding its global influence as an international association of learning educators. We have a growing membership of international educators, and our staff is working to get smarter about how education systems around the world are learning and growing, engaging with educators in Canada, Australia, and Singapore, just to name a few.

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Jeff Ronneberg is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

I experience this influence in many ways. As a participant in Learning Forward's Academy, a 2½-year extended opportunity to grow as a learning leader, I saw up close the passion of educators from Northern Lights School Division in Alberta, Canada. How they view their work impacted how I view mine. This district is a learning community that aligns the work of educators around improving student learning.

The growing influence of international education is also present in the school district where I work. I recently spoke with a parent who is moving his children to our district in suburban Minneapolis from a school in Singapore. Our staff is planning the transition with the staff in Singapore just as they would if the student was moving from a community nearby.

Like schools across the country, our classrooms have an international influence. Ten years ago, only 2% of our students spoke a home language other than English. Today, that number is 21%.

Last spring, I met five elementary students who had just spoken at a ceremony that recognized the school's progress with closing the achievement gap. Four of the five students have lived in another country, and they are each younger than 9. (See photo below.)

This growing diversity is also apparent among our teachers. We have teachers who have taught in Europe, Asia, Canada, and South America. They bring a wealth of experience as well as knowledge of effective professional practice that benefits the whole staff.

In a world that grows smaller by the day due to the convergence of technology and globalization, Learning Forward is growing in influence,

Students who spoke at a recent Woodcrest Elementary School ceremony are, from left, Jeremy Penaloza, John Barban-Ireheta, Levi Kamara, Ashley Wongbi, and Dakota Wallner. Back row, from left: Amy Bjurlin, continuous improvement coach; Brian Grogan, Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation chairperson; Judi Kahoun, principal; Jeff Ronneberg, superintendent.

connecting educators around the world so the students we work with are prepared to thrive in a future in which Boston and Bangalore are neighbors.

REFERENCE
Friedman, T.L. & Mandelbaum, M. (2011). *That used to be us.* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. ■

Nominations open for board of trustees

The Learning Forward board of trustees is seeking candidates for open positions on the board.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the board of trustees or know a Learning Forward member whom you would like to nominate, review the Board Oath of Office on the Learning Forward website for a description of expectations of board members.

Applications, available on the website, must be submitted by June 28. Applicants will be notified of the slate of candidates by Aug. 16.

Voting begins Sept. 2 and ends at 5 p.m. Eastern time on Oct. 1. All candidates will be notified of election results by Oct. 7, after which results will be posted on the Learning Forward website.

New board members begin their terms Dec. 11 at the end of the Annual Conference in Dallas, Texas.

To qualify as a candidate, an individual must:

- Have been a Learning Forward member for at least two years;
- Have attended at least one Learning Forward Annual Conference;
- Be employed in the field of education (special consideration will be given to candidates employed by K-12 school districts); and
- Have not have served on the board during the past two years.

Board members, among other duties and responsibilities:

- Advocate for and advance the purpose and priorities of Learning Forward;
- Commit to serve for a minimum of three years;
- Are current dues-paying members of Learning Forward;
- Attend and participate in all meetings of the board of trustees;
- Attend and perform board responsibilities at all Learning Forward conferences;
- Serve and support Learning Forward Affiliates and other programs;
- Represent Learning Forward at the request of the president;
- Represent the perspectives of the diverse membership of Learning Forward; and
- Promote Learning Forward membership and services.

For more information, visit **http://learningforward.org/who-we-are/board-of-trustees/2013-elections.**

book club

GROWING INTO EQUITY
Professional Learning and Personalization in High-Achieving Schools
By Sonia Gleason and Nancy Gerzon

What makes a Title I school high achieving, and what can we all learn from that experience? Professional learning and leadership that supports personalized instruction make the difference, as captured in the authors' research.

This book shows how four outstanding schools are making individualized learning a reality for every teacher and student. The common thread is the commitment to ensuring every student achieves. Readers will find:

- Guidance on identifying obstacles to equity within your school;
- Background that builds a case for personalized learning;
- Four case studies that show the values, professional learning practices, leadership, and systems that have helped schools transform learning; and

- Templates for creating team-based professional learning that expands individualized instruction in every classroom.

Discover new approaches for individual, team, and whole-school professional learning that support personalized learning, drawn from schools that are leaders in overcoming challenges and creating opportunities.

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 Sept. 15. For more information about this or any membership package, call 800-727-7288 or email office@learningforward.org.
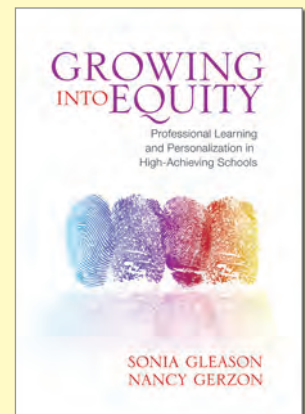
> **"We have one tight window of time to ensure that educators have the content knowledge and pedagogical expertise to implement the Common Core."**
>
> *— Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward's executive director*

REPORT URGES STATE LEADERS TO 'SEIZE THE MOMENT'

State education leaders should take the lead in efforts to create more coherent, comprehensive, and sustained statewide professional learning systems that help educators meet the promise of the Common Core, according to a new policy brief by Learning Forward.

Seizing the Moment: State Lessons for Transforming Professional Learning underscores the importance of a coordinated state professional learning strategy, the adoption of professional learning standards, the value of assessing the quality of professional development, and strategies for leveraging state leadership to drive improvements at the regional and district level.

The brief is a first look at lessons learned through Learning Forward's ongoing initiative, Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: Implementing the Common Core.

"We have one tight window of time to ensure that educators have the content knowledge and pedagogical expertise to implement the Common Core," said Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward's executive director. "It's time for states to seize the moment and eliminate policy incoherence, set standards to codify and measure good professional learning practice, and develop the policy framework to provide sustained, intensive, ongoing, job-embedded professional learning in every school."

The brief includes a discussion of six key policy elements necessary to transform traditional approaches into a comprehensive system of professional learning as well as lessons for state education leaders.

Access the brief at www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/seizing-the-moment.pdf.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

June 28: Nominations for board of trustees candidates due.

June 30: Last day to save $75 on registration for 2013 Annual Conference in Dallas, Texas.

July 21-24: Learning Forward's 2013 Summer Conference in Minneapolis, Minn.

Dec. 7-11: Learning Forward's 2013 Annual Conference in Dallas, Texas.

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PRINCIPAL NETWORKS

www.learningforward.org/publications/learning-principal

The Learning Communities standard documents the role of collaborative learning in helping practitioners reach their individual and collective goals. Read the spring issue of *The Learning Principal* to see how School Leaders Network brings networks of principals together to identify, reflect on, and accelerate critical leadership skills using a research-based learning approach that focuses on student achievement. Learn how they share best practices, challenges, and issues that foster or inhibit their individual leadership efforts while building a culture based on trust, collaborative learning, and collective responsibility. Use the tool in this issue to help small groups better understand the Learning Communities standard, consider what behaviors represent the standard in action, and rewrite the standard in their own words.

LEARNING SYSTEMS

www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars

How do today's school leaders break the limitations of the past and create cultures of curiosity and innovation in their schools? Paul Ash, co-author of *School Systems That Learn,* facilitates a two-part webinar that outlines a blueprint for transforming individual schools within a district into a single, high-functioning system built on a foundation of collaborative professional learning. Ash leads discussions on topics such as how to identify and overcome the human and political limitations that hold back positive change, strategies for bolstering faculty and staff morale, and how to align professional learning with student-centered district standards.

JOIN AN AFFILIATE

www.learningforward.org/get-involved/affiliates

Affiliates provide 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.

Join or form an affiliate to network and form relationships with other professionals as part of a learning community while making a difference in your own school, district, state, or province.

TIME FOR LEARNING

http://bit.ly/ZrK0J8

Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh addresses the issue of finding time for professional learning:

"Educators are overwhelmed with the number of changes they are expected to implement in their schools. The number one resource they request to assist them in implementing these improvements is time — time for deeper learning, planning, collaboration, and problem solving. I rarely meet a person who is opposed to providing educators the time they need for continuous improvement. They agree time should be part of the regular work schedule so the practice of continuous improvement doesn't require burning the midnight oil or catching up over the weekends. And yet finding time is still a challenge."

Learning Forward looks beyond North America's borders

Fred Brown, Learning Forward's director of strategy and development, is passionate about expanding our reach beyond North America. As our unofficial international learning ambassador, he travels widely to share information about Learning Forward and learn how educators in other countries tackle issues related to professional learning.

Each time he returns, he is even more emphatic that we have an obligation to learn with, listen to, and help shape the international agenda for professional learning.

Learning Forward Senior Advisor Joellen Killion has also traveled extensively to share the organization's message and listen to how educators interpret our standards in the context of their educational systems. She gathered feedback from an international panel during the revision of the Standards for Professional Learning. Universal acceptance of the standards could increase the impact and influence they carry in policy conversations.

However, Learning Forward membership is 97% North American. We are not much of an international organization. To change this, we have outlined these steps to become more

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Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@ learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward.

international in our intentions.

Tap the strengths of international colleagues to inform our publications and conferences. We will be more intentional in identifying, recruiting, and enlisting the support of international colleagues. We publish six journals per year and host learning events year-round and will ensure that international perspectives are represented in each issue as well as within each learning opportunity. You can help by reviewing the editorial calendar and conference call for proposals posted on our website and alerting us to places or individuals with expertise on the topics we're covering.

Engage in learning conversations through our online communities. This fall, we are launching learning communities dedicated to the Standards for Professional Learning and other issues that have surfaced from our international conversations. With online learning communities, participants can use translation tools to break the language barrier and engage in conversations that enrich all participants with the diversity of experiences, perspectives, and resources each person brings. We invite you to join us in these important conversations.

Collaborate on important work that influences the field. In 2009, Learning Forward launched a four-part study on the status of professional learning in the United States. A key feature of that study was what the U.S.

can learn from its international higher-performing counterparts. We hope to undertake a similar study for Canada before our Annual Conference returns to Canada in 2016.

We have collaborated with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, participated in the International Summit on the Teaching Profession, and joined efforts of the Asia Society's Partnership for Global Learning. We are continuing conversations with all three organizations about our shared agenda for the future. We hope to contribute to AdvancED accreditation process and offer an international Learning School designation.

We are working with OECD to see how we can leverage a soon-to-be-released study of the global professional learning landscape. (See "A global perspective" on p. 10.) More than 50 hours of interviews and months of document study have resulted in a technical report that expands our knowledge of best practices in other countries.

We want educators beyond North America to see value in formal affiliation with our association. We offer digital memberships and encourage educators to organize affiliates abroad.

We hope to report success stories from this agenda and want to hear from you how this effort has influenced your work and added value to your daily efforts. ◼

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