

Fort Wayne initiative strengthens leadership

Principals and assistant principals in Fort Wayne Community Schools recently participated in a three-day institute focusing on building rigor in student instruction, data collection, and professional learning.

The institute is part of a two-year commitment Learning Forward has made to Fort Wayne to strengthen the district's central office as they support principals and school leadership teams. Frederick Brown, Learning Forward's director of strategy and development, and Kay Psencik, senior consultant for Learning Forward, worked with Fort Wayne Community Schools as the district team developed the institute's agenda and activities.

"I saw a lot of evidence of Learning Forward's influence throughout this institute," Brown said. "First, the district has integrated KASAB in the district's overall improvement framework. They have asked principals to look beyond the knowledge their staff might gain but more at the skills and behaviors they demonstrate.

"Second, the Standards for Professional Learning and the district's own definition of professional learning, which Kay and I helped them write, are serving as the foundation for all of the district's professional learning work. We are definitely making a difference here in

Fort Wayne, and some of this story will be told in our upcoming *Becoming a Learning System* book."

This work, which is being externally evaluated by Arroyo Research, is part of Learning Forward's Leading Forward initiative. The initiative is built on these assumptions:

- School leaders play a critical role in school reform efforts. There are virtually no documented instances of successful school turnarounds without a highly effective principal;
- Since districts create the conditions in which school leaders work, any effort to support principals must also focus on strengthening the effectiveness of central office; and
- Principals don't work in isolation. They distribute leadership in order to scale and sustain effective practices.

Fort Wayne has committed to a multiyear engagement with Learning Forward because the district is serious about creating a system of supports for its school principals and their teams.

For more information about Leading Forward and the efforts in Fort Wayne, email frederick.brown@learningforward.org.

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:

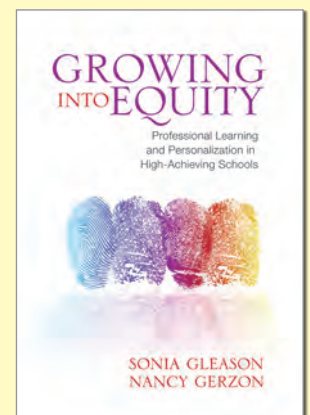
- Guidance on identifying obstacles to equity within your school;
- Background that builds a case for personalized learning;
- Four case studies that show the values, professional learning practices, leadership, and systems that have helped schools transform learning; and

- 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.





Successful change requires leadership at all levels

Educators across the country are in the midst of implementing the Common Core. I wonder what the results of these efforts will be in three to five years. Will we see systemic changes in our schools?

Historically, we have learned that, no matter the industry, most change efforts are not effectively implemented, and there is often little success in transforming personal practices or systemic actions and results.

Why is change so hard?

According to Lee Colan and Julie Davis-Colan (2013), “It’s not that our intentions are bad; quite the contrary. . . . The problem is that most of us don’t stick with it long enough to permanently change our behavior and get the results we want.”

In a 2005 *Fast Company* article, Alan Deutschman emphasized the difficulty of change when he cited a study by Dr. Edward Miller at Johns Hopkins University. You would think an individual who has heart disease resulting in bypass surgery would change his or her eating habits and exercise. Yet, Dr. Miller found, “if you look at people after coronary artery bypass grafting two years later, 90% of them have not changed their lifestyle.”

The good news is that, despite the difficulty of change, there are schools across the country that have navigated

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

on board JEFF RONNEBERG

their journeys successfully. Whether the change you are engaged with is the Common Core or another initiative, professional learning must be at the core. Ultimately, if the adults are not learning, the students will not learn.

I know that if the staff in our district are to effectively implement significant initiatives, it is my responsibility to create the systemic conditions that provide the time and resources necessary for teachers and staff to engage in learning. I need to model learning while creating a compelling case for change and improvement. I need to foster a culture of reflection that results in people seeing how their unconscious mindsets might influence their practice.

As a leader, I can’t do it alone. It takes leaders at all levels of the district. One example would be Westwood Middle School, which has taken strides in personalizing professional learning based on the unique needs of its students. While the school is part of a larger system, staff know they need to look carefully at where their students struggle to know what they need to learn. When I walk through the school, there are conversations happening at all levels — the 7th-grade math teachers examining data together, or the continuous improvement coaches

talking one-on-one with teachers to help them improve specific lessons. At every level, these leaders are taking responsibility for aligning their learning — and their resources — to attain better results for students.

The school-based leaders and learners in my district have helped



me understand that successful change requires leadership from all levels, continuously adapting our efforts to ever-changing influences, bringing coherence and alignment to our efforts.

REFERENCES

Colan, L.J. & Davis-Colan, J. (2013). *Stick with it: Mastering the art of adherence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Deutschman, A. (2005, May). Change or die. *Fast Company*. Available online at www.fastcompany.com/52717/change-or-die. ■

TAKING MEASURE

Here is how the work Learning Forward has done over the past year aligns with the organization's strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: LEADERSHIP AND PRACTICE

Learning Forward develops educator practices to lead effective professional learning.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Leadership sessions at the conferences help build capacity at all levels in districts.
- E-learning courses with the highest attendance (SMART Goals, School Leadership Teams, and Coaching) were directly aligned with this priority.
- Many *JSD* articles focus on specific skill development as well as provide models from a range of school contexts and positions.
- Learning Forward continues to widely disseminate the Standards for Professional Learning.
- Consistent messaging that integrates the Standards for Professional Learning throughout all channels drives home core themes.
- Meetings like the Leadership Reception and the New England Thought Leaders Meeting are examples of the way Learning Forward engaged educators and exchanged information that demonstrates leadership and effective practice.
- Newsletters and blogs help readers learn from successful professional learning leaders.
- Foundation awards showcase practitioners building individual and team capacity to lead professional learning in local contexts.
- Learning Forward has been supporting Fort Wayne Community Schools using elements of the Leading Forward curriculum. The main goal has been to build capacity of the district office to support principals and school leadership teams.
- Learning Forward is seeking

AdvancED special designation for learning schools. The Standards Assessment Inventory and Innovation Configuration maps are being embedded within their accreditation and school improvement processes.

- Learning Forward recently acquired the intellectual property rights to the College Board Leadership Institute for Principals. Learning Forward joined forces with the institute team to apply for a School Leadership Program federal grant to take this national model and implement it in Milwaukee Public Schools.
- Affiliates extend core messages of Learning Forward.
- Learning Forward's Center for Results works with clients throughout the country to improve educator practice.
- Monthly Connect e-newsletter offers resources and learning opportunities to members and nonmembers.
- Learning Exchange offers an online community for educators to collaborate virtually.
- Twenty-two schools are members of the Learning School Alliance. Schools design customized professional learning plans based on the Standards for Professional Learning that support resolution of a problem of practice aimed at improving student performance.
- The Learning School Alliance curriculum has a section devoted to leadership strategies in collaborative settings.
- During Learning School Alliance summer sessions, principals participate in role-alike sessions to hone their leadership skills.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: IMPACT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Learning Forward supports educators to assess and report the impact of effective professional learning.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- The iPD Showcase at the 2012 Annual Conference highlighted technology that can be used in accountability.
- IC maps help educators examine current practices and actions related to implementing the standards.
- Several *JSD* articles have tools or self-assessments to help educators begin to measure practice.
- Weekly communication team meetings ensure that all channels share current information about trends and current events in the field and the programs Learning Forward provides to impact professional learning and student success.
- Articles in the newsletters and blog have helped readers learn about assessing impact.
- The Learning Forward Academy is developing a plan to assess impact during the program and after members graduate.
- Learning Forward is working with My Learning Plan and LoudCloud to develop a system to measure the impact of individual and school activities.
- Learning Forward Foundation's Planning & Evaluation Committee wrote a feature for *JSD* to highlight a scholarship winner's story and impact.
- Annual Awards program recognizes the exemplary work of individuals, teams, and programs.
- SAI2 assesses the quality of professional learning.
- Learning School Alliance members take the Standards Assessment Inventory and use the results to monitor and adjust their customized professional learning plans.
- LSA summer sessions devote a day to developing SMART goals and linking these to student performance.
- LSA schools receive one-on-one coaching on analyzing SAI data and using it to impact practice.
- Through a grant from WestEd and the Doing What Works project, LSA facilitators created special tools to assist LSA schools in choosing appropriate professional learning.
- An outside evaluator is assessing

LSA specifically on its impact and effectiveness as a school improvement tool.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:
ADVOCACY AND POLICY**

Learning Forward engages educators and stakeholders in developing and implementing policy for effective professional learning.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Conferences offer high-quality advocacy sessions.
- Several states and school systems have adopted the latest Standards for Professional Learning in policy to drive effective practice.
- The Transforming Professional Learning Kentucky project's online community and live webinars facilitated shared development and learning.
- Transforming Professional Learning briefs offer rationale and recommendations for policy.
- Transforming Professional Learning policy workbook outlines process for examining and improving professional learning policies.
- Many blog postings are geared toward different stakeholders. Blog postings on teacher evaluation (and related pieces in other publications) have potential for influence.
- Conference keynotes such as Anne Bryant engage both educators and stakeholders in the role policy has on effective professional learning.
- Newsletters help readers learn from multiple practitioners engaging in developing and advocating for policies that support effective professional learning. Two examples:

- *The Leading Teacher*, Fall 2012, shows how teachers can influence local policies by making the case for professional learning.
- *The Learning System*, Winter 2013, features teacher-led teams from the New York State United Teachers Association. These teams designed a new teacher evaluation system that includes meaningful dialogues and plans for continued professional learning.
- The Academy Alumni Group is a network for sharing successful strategies and challenges in changing local practices and policies.
- Embedded within the Academy program is a requirement for participants to develop their own teachable point of view, which will be used to help them advocate for effective professional learning.
- The Transforming Professional Learning II project is providing state education agencies, affiliates, and districts with resources that will help them develop policies and practices that support more effective professional learning.
- Implementing the Common Core website pages offer resources and tools to assist the implementation of effective professional learning.
- One of the LSA course-of-study modules addresses how to advocate to a school's central office administration for effective professional learning.
- Learning Forward is working with members of the U.S. House of Representatives to strengthen the definition of professional learning in federal law (Elementary and Secondary Education Act).

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- Sept. 1-30:** Learning Forward board of trustees election.
- Sept. 15:** Manuscript deadline for April 2014 *JSD*. Theme: The future of learning.
- Oct. 15:** Manuscript deadline for June 2014 *JSD*. Theme: The fundamentals of professional learning.
- Oct. 16:** Last day to save \$50 on registration for the 2013 Annual Conference in Dallas, Texas.



LEARNING FORWARD'S PURPOSE: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

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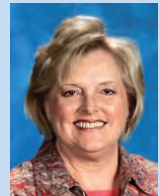
Grant and Scholarship Winners

The Learning Forward Foundation has announced its 2013 grant winners. These awards provide recipients opportunities to develop their expertise in leading professional learning within their schools and districts and to engage them in the broader Learning Forward community for ongoing professional collaboration and support.

Learning Forward Foundation is dedicated to impacting the future of leadership in schools that act on the belief that continuous learning by educators is essential to improving the achievement of all students. Funds raised by the foundation provide grant opportunities and scholarships for individuals, schools or teams, principals, and superintendents to further Learning Forward's purpose.

LEARNING FORWARD PRINCIPAL AS LEADER OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP

The Learning Forward Principal as Leader of Professional Learning is awarded to **Darlene Miller**, principal at Karns Elementary School, Knox County Schools in Knoxville, Tenn. This scholarship supports the principal through Learning Forward Annual Conference participation and individualized executive coaching as she converts good performance in her school to a new level of superiority of academic learning of staff and students. This scholarship honors the memory of Don Richardson.



CHIDLEY FUND ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP SCHOOL-BASED



This year's winner is **Bethanne Augsbach**, teacher at Woodland Elementary School in Monroe Township, N.J. This award is for educators working with large populations of underserved students and is awarded to a school-based teacher leader/coach who aspires to a role of leadership in the arena of professional learning. It provides funding to support participation in the Learning Forward Academy.

CHIDLEY FUND ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP DISTRICT-BASED

This year's winner is **Amy McWhirter**. She is a new teacher induction coordinator in the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools in Tennessee. The Chidley Scholarship is for a district leader responsible for professional learning at the system level. It provides funding to support participation in the Learning Forward Academy.



LEARNING FORWARD TEAM GRANT



The Learning Forward Team Grant is awarded to the team at Wayland Public Schools in Wayland, Mass., under the leadership of **Karyn Saxon** and **Tricia O'Reilly**. The grant supports teams (grade-level, school, and district) to advance Learning Forward's purpose.

THANKS TO GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP READERS

The Learning Forward Foundation Board would like to thank the following people for participating in the scholarship and grant review process: Charles Clemmons, Vicky Butler, Susan Patterson, Tiffany Coleman, Vaughn Gross, Jody Westbrook Bergman, Betty Ann Tults, Mike Murphy, Jody Wood, Janice Bradley, Bill Sommers, Linda Crain, Sharon Roberts, Barry Olhausen, Janice Shelby, Glee Moore, Gaye Hawks, Vicky Duff, Dale Hair, Ronni Reed, Lenore Cohen, Amy Colton, Betty Dillon Peterson, and Linda Munger.

PATSY HOCHMAN ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP

Jeff Fox is an instructional math coach in the Corpus Christi Independent School District in Texas. The scholarship is in honor of Patsy Hochman, who was killed by a drunk driver in 2008. Hochman's husband established the scholarship to continue her legacy. The scholarship provides funding to support participation in the Learning Forward Academy.



LEARN MORE AND DONATE. Learning Forward Foundation's work in advancing the organization's purpose is made possible through donations and the commitment of the teams, organizations, and individuals supported by grants and scholarships.

- Learn more about grants and scholarships: www.learningforward.org/foundation/scholarships-and-grants.
- To make a donation online, visit <https://commerce.learningforward.org/commerce/donate/>.
- Visit the foundation's table near registration to learn more about 2014 scholarships and grants available.