



## Learning to dive

When I was young, I spent many hours in our neighborhood swimming pool. While I managed to become a competent swimmer fairly quickly, learning to dive was a slog. There was nothing natural about it. I had to watch other divers, dissect each step, ask them to pause and tell me what they were doing as they approached the end of the diving board. I spent many hours step-step-stepping to the end of the board and then stopping in fear or frustration, but still determined not to be the only kid jumping in feet first.

Late one afternoon, I repeated the routine, conscious of every move, until something clicked. I hit the end of the board and bounced, arced, and splashed. As it happened, I knew I had it. I came up for air, and what I felt in that moment was joy. I wasn't proud or relieved — I was elated.

Years later, I remember vividly that moment of getting it. In piecing together the steps to get to that moment, I see the goal, the challenge, my lack of skills, the research, the persistence, and the feedback from others. But that's all academic — I want the joy. Shouldn't we all find joy in learning?

“Success, growth, and joy in learning were identified as fundamental

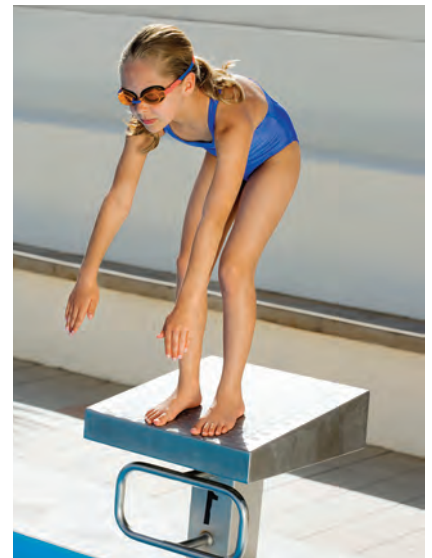
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goals for students, teachers, and administrators,” writes David McCommons on p. 13 as he describes how educators in the Fox Chapel Area School District achieve and sustain high results for students.

We're compelled to share stories like his. We are ever on the lookout for evidence in real schools that professional learning contributes in significant ways to students achieving at higher levels. At the same time, McCommons highlights joy as a goal. We don't often talk about that as a desired outcome for professional learning.

Yet we know how important joy is in schools. Educators who walk into schools each day certainly hope for it for the children they teach. They know instinctively the connection between joy and learning, that when students are engaged, struggling, and breaking through to their aha moments, that they experience real moments of joy.

We all experience joy in different ways. However, Learning Forward hopes that educators also find joy in learning. We believe that outcomes from aligning adult learning with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning are a path to joy. When school systems and schools create cultures of collaboration and trust, the environment is ripe for joy. As teachers increase their sense of self-efficacy, they have more opportunities to experience joy. When schools are places where all educators have time daily to join with



their colleagues to slog through the challenges, they are surely experiencing more moments when they get it — and the elation that follows. Educators know that hitting that mark is what will take them to their next goal to reach students.

We're excited to introduce a new column in *JSD*. In each issue, Learning Forward Senior Advisor Joellen Killion will write about recent relevant research in professional learning and explore how particular studies advance our understanding of effective professional learning. More importantly, she'll highlight what the studies mean for practitioners. Read *Lessons From Research* on p. 65. We appreciate Killion's insights and look forward to sharing them with you in future issues. ■