



Learning guide focuses on principals

Learning Forward has launched a free web-based professional learning guide using excerpts from the award-winning PBS documentary, *The Principal Story*, to illustrate five key practices of effective principals.

The Principal Story is a one-hour film portraying the challenges principals face in turning around low-performing public schools and raising student achievement. The film focuses on two principals: Tresa Dunbar, a Chicago elementary school principal, and Kerry Purcell, an elementary school principal in Springfield, Ill.

The *Principal Story Learning Guide* is available at www.learningforward.org/publications/the-principal-story-learning-guide

The Principal Story Learning Guide, geared toward those who prepare and develop aspiring or current school leaders as well as for educators

working to improve their own practice, takes learners through a progression of directed experiences using a mix of film clips

and activities.

The learning guide is divided into five units, each based on a key practice of effective principals identified from research sponsored by The Wallace Foundation. The units guide learners so they will be able to:

- Consider ideas about effective leadership practices before viewing film clips;
- Observe and discuss film clips of selected principal behaviors;
- Read an excerpt from the required text; and
- Complete activities that allow them to review research, link research with practice, take action, and reflect on what effective leadership practice means for their own choices, development, and growth as school leaders.

Facilitators can access a 23-minute film clip with excerpts from the original documentary available from The Wallace Foundation at www.wallacefoundation.org/principalstory/clips-from-the-film/Pages/default.aspx. The full-length documentary is also available for purchase.

book club

THE POWER OF TEACHER ROUNDS

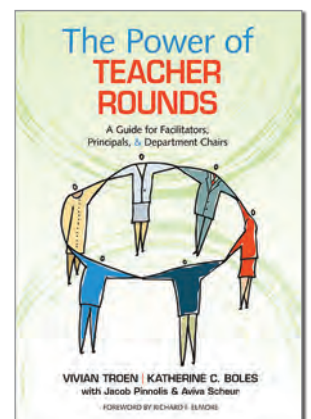
A Guide for Facilitators, Principals, & Department Chairs

By Vivian B. Troen and Katherine C. Boles

The practice of Teacher Rounds is a professional learning design that promotes teacher collaboration through making teaching practice public. *The Power of Teacher Rounds* traces the development of an effective Teacher Rounds group from formation to choosing a problem of practice, conducting the first round, observing, debriefing, making a commitment to a change of practice, and evaluating outcomes. The focus is on the individual teacher's classroom, and there is a strong emphasis on accountability. A chapter on expected outcomes offers a "vision of the possible," with a realistic picture of what a successful

rounds group may look like and what it will be able to accomplish.

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 June 15. For more information about this or any membership package, call **800-727-7288** or email office@learningforward.org.





Technology provides a new context for collaboration

I believe in the future of professional learning. I've heard that to believe in the future, you must be able to see it. I know this is true. But sometimes seeing the future starts with capturing nostalgic pictures of the past. Take Missouri's Outreach Teachers' Academy, for example.

The Outreach Teachers' Academy began more than a decade ago as a way to engage small, rural agricultural districts in our region in monthly consortium-like, collaborative learning experiences. Twelve years ago, we ventured out into this satellite landscape with no specific long-term goals for teacher learning.

We believed we were innovating, but we had no overall expectations for implementation and no accountability measurements. The term "accountability" wasn't even part of our professional vocabulary.

We gathered a group of teachers from several Missouri school districts in Vernon County to talk about the challenges of teaching in rural Missouri. We felt successful if participants carried away at least one new idea per session that might be used in classrooms the next day. That's how the academy started. It was simple, fun-filled, low-keyed, low-risk professional learning.

Fast-forwarding into preparations

•

Julie Blaine is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

on board JULIE BLAINE

for this year's academy, it's easy to celebrate how far we've traveled. The academy is now designed with purposeful intentions and standards in mind. Its goal this year is focused: to increase student performance through the use of effective questioning. School districts are expected to form collaborative partnerships and examine student work that demonstrates expected academy learning targets.

When I asked participants about classroom changes that have occurred as a result of academy membership, one long-term participant said that frequent collaboration with peers helps her stay focused on student growth and the latest research in education.

Another participant said the academy is an opportunity to open a new window of professional learning for her rural school. Teachers in the academy are now collaborative risk-takers. They expect to be challenged, and they absolutely expect to see changes in practice and performance.

As I look ahead, my professional learning vision for rural academy teachers holds close the truth that the most fundamental impact on student achievement is an effective teacher in each classroom. I also see continued economic challenges for our rural schools. Teacher growth requires

funding, and that funding must include investment in technology.

When — not if — this happens, I see a new context for collaboration. I envision a new platform for learning and discussions. This new virtual classroom will allow rural Missouri educators to analyze student work alongside classroom practices. Videotaped lessons will be commonplace. Academy peers will use digital technology to interact, providing feedback and challenges via live cues



and prompts. This new learning will be self-directed and self-reflective, but steeped in teaching standards.

We aren't there yet, but we've come a long way. And we have unstoppable momentum. Stop by in a couple of years and say, "Show me your vision!" We'll be glad to have you log in. ■



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

BUSINESS OFFICE

504 S. Locust St.
Oxford, OH 45056
513-523-6029, 800-727-7288
Fax: 513-523-0638
office@learningforward.org
www.learningforward.org

LEARNING FORWARD STAFF

Executive director

Stephanie Hirsh
stephanie.hirsh@learningforward.org

Director of strategy and development

Frederick Brown
frederick.brown@learningforward.org

Director of communications

Tracy Crow
tracy.crow@learningforward.org

Director of learning

Carol François
carol.francois@learningforward.org

Director, Center for Results

M. René Islas
rene.islas@learningforward.org

Director of business services

Leslie Miller
leslie.miller@learningforward.org

Director of marketing

Robert Tess
robert.tess@learningforward.org

Associate director of publications

Anthony Armstrong
anthony.armstrong@learningforward.org

Associate director of e-learning

Tom Manning
tom.manning@learningforward.org

Scholar laureate

Shirley Hord
shirley.hord@learningforward.org

Senior advisor

Joellen Killion
joellen.killion@learningforward.org

Distinguished senior fellow

Hayes Mizell
hmizell@gmail.com

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Julie Blaine, president
Deborah Renee Jackson, president-elect
Jeff Ronneberg, past president
John Eyolfson Myra Whitney
Clara Howitt Olivia Zepeda
Janet Samuels

Foundation welcomes new board members

The Learning Forward Foundation has added four new members to its board.

Steve Barkley is executive vice president of PLS 3rd Learning and a former New Jersey elementary school teacher. For the past 30 years, he has served as a consultant to school districts, teacher organizations, state departments of education, and colleges and universities.

Heather Lageman is Race to the Top Local Education Agency Director for the Maryland State Department of Education and secretary of the Learning Forward Maryland affiliate.

Ronni Reed is a New Jersey educational consultant who has been a presenter at Learning Forward's Annual Conference and a former staff development leader for the Monmouth County Vocational School District.

Jody Westbrook Bergman is a former school principal, a longtime Learning Forward member and former director of the Learning Forward Texas affiliate.

The Learning Forward Foundation

As part of its 2014 Annual Giving Campaign, the foundation has established a Leadership Society. Levels of membership are based on annual donations:

- Copper: \$20 to \$99;
- Bronze: \$100 to \$299;
- Silver: \$300 to \$499;
- Gold: \$500 to \$999; and
- Platinum: \$1,000 or more.

To donate online or download a donation card, visit: www.learningforward.org/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. The monies raised by the foundation provide grant opportunities and scholarships for individuals, schools or teams, principals, and superintendents to further Learning Forward's purpose, "Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves."

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- April 15:** Manuscript deadline for December 2014 JSD. Theme: Teacher evaluation.
- April 15:** Applications due for Learning Forward Foundation scholarships and grants.
- June 30:** Last day to save \$75 on registration for 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tenn.
- Dec. 6-10:** Learning Forward's 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tenn.