



## CLASSROOM-FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS

Education Post

Education Post is a nonpartisan communications organization dedicated to building support for student-focused improvements in public education from preschool to high school. Its website offers “a different conversation about public education and what our children need — an honest and civil conversation of many voices, united by a common belief in the power of education to transform lives.” Recent topics include “Bursting the standardized testing bubble,” “Demonstrating leadership in the over-testing debate,” and “Common Core helps North Dakota students dive deeper into reading.”

<http://educationpost.org>

## TOOLS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Momentum

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation publication covers three major areas of focus: effective teaching, personalized learning, and college-ready expectations. In the September 2014 issue, the main topic is teacher evaluation, with articles on teacher teams in Batavia, Ohio, a project called Best Foot Forward, and a look at continuous improvement. The publication is a mix of downloadable PDFs, web pages and video, and includes links to resources from Gates Foundation partners.

<http://collegeready.gatesfoundation.org/momentum/september-2014>

## REACHING UNDERSERVED STUDENTS

### Linked Learning: Using Learning Time Creatively to Prepare Students for College and Career

Center for American Progress & Alliance for Excellent Education, October 2014

This report highlights the efforts of high schools implementing a California-led initiative called Linked Learning in the Los Angeles Unified School District, Oakland Unified School District, Porterville Unified School District, and Sacramento Unified School District. The reform effort reconfigures the use of time in order to provide underserved students with a more effective learning experience. The report recommends that districts give schools flexibility to redesign schedules to give teachers and students time to implement effective approaches to high school reform and calls for funding to be used for common planning time and professional learning between career and technical education and academic teachers.

[www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2014/10/07/98462/linked-learning](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2014/10/07/98462/linked-learning)



## SYSTEMWIDE REFORM

### Innovating Toward a Vibrant Learning Ecosystem: Ten Pathways for Transforming Learning

KnowledgeWorks, 2014

KnowledgeWorks created an innovation pathways framework to help education stakeholders become active agents of change. The framework identifies 10 key systemic levers of transformation that together promise to create a learning ecosystem that is vibrant for all learners. These levers include learning cultures and structures, human capital, data, assessment, leadership, and policy. The innovation pathways fall into two categories: transforming the core of learning and transforming supporting systemic structures. This report details each of the pathways, with suggested strategies for how, over time, educators might move toward that vision.



## URBAN SCHOOLS

### The 2014 Broad Prize

The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation

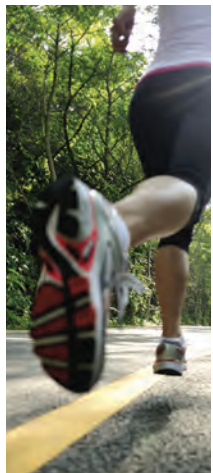
For the first time in its 13-year history, the Broad Prize for Urban Education has been awarded to two school districts: Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia and Orange County Public Schools in Florida. The \$1 million prize honors urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income students and students of color. Learn more about the winning districts, see a video about the 2014 finalists, or explore the process and criteria for the prize.

[www.broadprize.org/past\\_winners/2014.html](http://www.broadprize.org/past_winners/2014.html)

**PREPARING FOR COMMON CORE**  
**Common Core State Standards & the**  
**Transformation of Professional Development**  
*Education First, Summer 2014*

In a series of three reports, Education First looks at what educators need to succeed with the Common Core. The first brief describes and illustrates three elements that research shows to be the backbone of any serious approach to engage and prepare teachers for the Common Core. The second brief spotlights how three new professional learning approaches have played out across the country. The last brief addresses what policymakers can do to advance high-quality professional development at scale.

[www.education-first.com](http://www.education-first.com)



**TEACHER LEADERS**  
**Teacher-Led Professional Learning**

The Teacher-Led Professional Learning website is a project of the Pahara-Aspen Teacher-Leader Fellows program. The program's goal is to help teachers, schools, unions, and districts implement collaborative, job-embedded professional learning that leads to better student learning by developing and using the skills of involved teacher leaders. Program strategies fall in three categories: Build capacity, build awareness, and implement. The website walks readers through the steps necessary to design a teacher-led, job-embedded professional learning system, with resources to guide each step. Topics include defining teacher leader roles; selecting, training, and evaluating teacher leaders; finding time for professional learning; funding; and leading successful teams.

<http://teacherledprofessionallearning.org>

**EVALUATION REFORM**

**Teacher Evaluations in an Era of Rapid Change: From "Unsatisfactory" to "Needs Improvement"**

*Bellwether Education Partners, August 2014*

The authors examine what can be learned so far from the effort to revamp teacher evaluations. Using data collected from 17 states and the District of Columbia, they note that districts are starting to evaluate teachers as professionals; schools are providing teachers with better, timelier feedback; districts still don't factor student growth into teacher evaluation ratings; districts have wide discretion; and districts continue to ignore performance when making decisions about teachers. Based on this research, policymakers are urged to track the data, work closely with districts, give reforms time to take effect, and understand that evaluation reform can coexist with other changes.

<http://bellwethereducation.org/publication/teacher-evaluations-era-rapid-change>

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**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH**

*JSD* is published six times a year to promote improvement in the quality of professional learning as a means to improve student learning in K-12 schools. Contributions from members and nonmembers of Learning Forward are welcome.

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