

## Apply for the 2015 Learning Team Award

Learning Forward is seeking applications for the 2015 Shirley Hord Learning Team Award. The award honors a school-based team that demonstrates excellence in professional learning.

Based on Learning Forward's definition of professional learning, the award recognizes a school team that successfully implements the cycle of continuous improvement for professional learning that results in student achievement.

Application deadline is Oct. 1.

Winning team members receive a cash gift for their school to support collaborative professional learning, complimentary 2015 Annual Conference registrations, and a profile in

*JSD* and on Learning Forward's website. The winning team will be honored at an Annual Conference general session.

Here's how to apply:

- Download and complete the 2015 Learning Team Award application.
- Produce a 10- to 12-minute video capturing the team engaged in the cycle of continuous improvement.
- Include a letter of recommendation from your school principal.
- Complete the brief, two-part essay describing how your learning team exemplifies Learning Forward's definition of professional development, including evidence of student results.



### ABOUT SHIRLEY HORD



Shirley Hord, Learning Forward's scholar laureate, has focused her career on research on the impact of professional learning communities. She has led research teams that have identified the attributes of effective learning teams and collaborative learning's benefits to staff and students. She has assisted schools and districts in building structures and acquiring strategies for this form of professional learning. She has written several books focused on her research and recommendations for school leaders.

- Include a list of learning team members.
- Complete the talent release form.
- Include a high-resolution team photo.
- Submit applications to [awards@learningforward.org](mailto:awards@learningforward.org) by Oct. 1.

The application and talent release forms can be found online at [www.learningforward.org/get-involved/awards](http://www.learningforward.org/get-involved/awards). For more information, contact Tom Manning at [tom.manning@learningforward.org](mailto:tom.manning@learningforward.org).

### book club

UNCOMMON LEARNING:  
Creating Schools That Work for Kids  
By Eric C. Sheninger

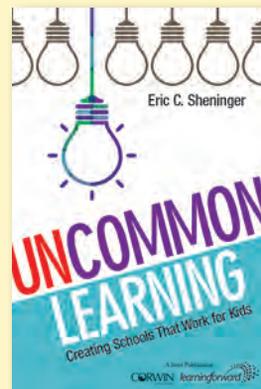
**U**nCommon Learning provides a process for schools to integrate digital media and new applications with purpose and build a culture of learning with pleasure.

The author shows school leaders how to transform a learning culture through sustainable and innovative initiatives into one that lets students use real-world tools to do real-world work and develop skills society demands. The book addresses such innovations as makerspaces, blended learning, and microcredentials.

Vignettes illustrate key ideas and implementation tips. Relevant links add depth and provide further details on each

initiative. Pertinent graphics and data show how each initiative has had a positive impact on student achievement. An appendix at the end of the book provides additional resources to assist leaders with implementation.

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](mailto:office@learningforward.org).





## Let's raise our voices together

Over the past 30-plus years, I have attended many education conferences for different reasons. Now, as president of Learning Forward, I find I have an entirely new perspective on their potential value to support education professionals. Looking back, I see that my reasons for attending conferences go along with what I have needed from any kind of professional learning period, regardless of the venue.

When I was a teacher starting out, conferences were a great way to get exposed to new ideas, people, names, and products. Everything was new, and the ideas helped me develop a repertoire of strategies and a storehouse of information. At that point, conferences helped me develop a sense of the scope of the new world I had entered as a professional. I always returned home with bags of handouts and notebooks, business cards, and names to investigate further.

As I advanced in my career and became a principal, I still had so much to learn about what I needed to be able to do. I was in a new role with entirely new responsibilities. A different set of questions guided my thinking at this point. I was less attracted to the huge marketplace of ideas and ready to focus on specific subsets of skills I needed to develop in my bag of tricks.

**Deborah Jackson is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.**

### on board DEBORAH JACKSON

It didn't take long for me to realize that, as a principal, I had responsibilities to other adults in my learning. As the instructional leader in the school, I knew that not only did my skills need attention, but what could I bring home to share with other educators in my building? What learning would help me improve in knowing how to help them? What learning would they need to help our team be our best for our students?

As an administrator supporting other leaders, my lens in attending conferences is quite different. I am still a continuous learner, so the inspirational thought leaders and intensive learning sessions focused on my areas of need are a high priority. I'm also thinking about what I say to my colleagues who lead schools: If you're not confident about the professional learning you facilitate so your staff is successful with their students, what do you need to learn so you will be? There isn't a higher priority for you as a leader. That's still true for me, so I carry my whole team with me when I attend any learning, thinking about their needs and how to ensure they have access to the best. And how I wish I could speak to myself as a new teacher and help her understand how important those connections to other adult learners are from day one.

Finally, as president of Learning Forward and a member passionate about our cause, I feel the Annual Conference offers a unique opportunity to articulate, recognize, and celebrate what we most believe in: that effective professional learning is the most powerful means we have to ensure the best teaching for every student in every school. The conference is an opportunity to raise our voices for what we believe in, together, as a membership association. We're



surrounded by the practitioners and thought leaders who know best what it takes to make professional learning meaningful, and our message is strongest when we speak it together. I look forward to joining you in December. ■



**LEARNING FORWARD'S VISION:**  
Excellent teaching and learning every day.

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## Art sale benefits Learning Forward Foundation

The Learning Forward Foundation will host a new fundraising event at Learning Forward's Annual Conference in December. Called ScholARTship 2015, the event will showcase student and adult artwork, followed by a sale of the original works to educators attending the conference.

Funds raised will be used toward scholarships and grants that give teachers and administrators opportunities to improve their skills and, as a result, improve outcomes for students. The foundation annually awards more than \$65,000 in scholarships and grants focused on improving professional learning systems.

Artists, art teachers, and students are encouraged to donate artwork for the fundraiser. Deadline for donations is Oct. 30. Go to [www.learningforward.org/foundation](http://www.learningforward.org/foundation) for more details and to download an art donation form.

### LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

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|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Oct. 1:</b>        | Application deadline for the 2015 Learning Team Award.  |
| <b>Oct. 1:</b>        | Last day to save \$50 on registration to Learning Forward's 2015 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.            |
| <b>Oct. 6-7:</b>      | Learning Forward Fall Institute in Princeton, New Jersey.   |
| <b>Dec. 5-9:</b>      | 2015 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.  |
| <b>Jan. 31, 2016:</b> | Deadline to apply to present at Learning Forward's 2016 Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. |

### AdvancED OFFERS LEARNING SCHOOL DESIGNATION

AdvancED and Learning Forward are partnering to offer schools committed to providing quality professional development for their staff an opportunity to earn a Learning School Designation.

The designation provides schools with a set of criteria and research-based practices that indicate a quality professional learning program has been established and sustained at the school level. A school that earns the Learning School Designation is AdvancED accredited and has met or exceeded additional criteria for its quality professional learning practices and programs.

Each institution that earns the Learning School Designation receives a certificate of recognition similar to the AdvancED Accreditation Certificate. Additionally, Learning Forward provides the following benefits to all schools during their designation terms:

- Organizational membership providing access to publications, resources, and learning experiences;
- An invitation to conduct a breakout session at Learning Forward's Annual Conference;
- Recognition in an article in *JSD*;
- Recognition at Learning Forward and AdvancED conferences;
- Membership in an international network of recognized Learning Schools; and
- The opportunity to serve on an external review team for Learning Forward and/or AdvancED.

For more information, visit [www.advanc-ed.org/services/learning-school-designation-certification](http://www.advanc-ed.org/services/learning-school-designation-certification).