

Learning Forward welcomes new president, members to board of trustees

Learning Forward's board of trustees has a new president and two new members.

John Eyolfson, district science coordinator at Cherry Creek School District in Colorado, began his term as president in December. Eyolfson succeeds Deborah Renee Jackson, special project administrator for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia. Jackson now serves as past president.

Eyolfson, a science educator for 27 years, has been a member of Learning Forward since 2001 and joined its board in 2013. In his current position, Eyolfson leads the design of the school system's K-12 science curriculum and implements its high-quality professional learning. He was a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 1998 and is a regular contributor to *JSD*.

"Serving the membership of Learning Forward is a great honor," Eyolfson says. "I am excited to work with the members, the Learning Forward staff, and the members of the board of trustees to help advance the mission and vision of the organization as well as advance the implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning."

Scott Laurence is Learning Forward's new president-elect. Laurence is the superintendent of schools for the Carmel Unified School District in California.

Joining the board this year are newly elected board members Steve Cardwell and Leigh Wall. They begin three-



Steve Cardwell



Leigh Wall

year terms of service.

Cardwell, a Learning Forward member since 1998, is director of the Transformative Educational Leadership Program at

the University of British Columbia. He served as the superintendent/CEO of the Vancouver School District until the end of February 2015.

Wall is the superintendent of the Santa Fe Independent School District in Santa Fe, Texas. She has been an integral part of several Learning Forward conferences and presentations since becoming an association member in 2005.

"Our board members live and breathe Learning Forward's mission and vision every day, whether in their day-to-day positions in their organizations or through their service to Learning Forward," says Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward. "I appreciate their leadership throughout the year and their commitment to our continuous improvement."

APPLY FOR A LEARNING SCHOOL DESIGNATION

Learning Forward has partnered with AdvanceEd to offer a Learning School designation to qualified schools. 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.

Achieving the designation demonstrates the school places a high value on professional learning that increases teaching effectiveness and student achievement. To qualify, schools must demonstrate adherence to the Standards for Professional Learning and be accredited by AdvancED.

Applying for the designation sends a powerful message to all community stakeholders that the school values learning for both adults and students.

For more information on the program and to apply, visit www.advanc-ed.org/services/learning-school-designation-certification.





Learning Forward offers the opportunity to learn, grow, and give back

I am Learning Forward! I want to share with you how I became a learning leader and a Learning Forward leader — both through the same process.

In 2000, I applied to become an instructional technology specialist. This job was not about the hardware. It was about working with teachers to change their practice with classrooms that integrate technology with teaching and learning. I assumed that if I could teach children, I could teach adults.

Although there are many pedagogical practices that translated for me — “good teaching is good teaching” — I found myself trying to adjust my skills to fit my new job.

One year later, I attended Learning Forward’s Annual Conference in Denver. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to be an effective teacher of adults and to understand underlying ideas about change. The experience helped me understand what it means to be a Learning Forward member.

Over the next few years, I attended many of the Annual Conferences. I took a deep dive into the Standards for Professional Learning. I became a better instructional coach, and I understood how to design and evaluate the effect of professional development. I could see how this work had a direct impact on teachers and students in my Colorado district.

John Eyolfson is president of Learning Forward’s board of trustees.

on board JOHN EYOLFSON

I see also how my district — Cherry Creek Schools in Colorado — has gained from its participation in Learning Forward. Over the past 15 years, the district has embraced learning communities, designing professional learning experiences that change the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behavior of educators, all with the ultimate goal of improving the educational experience of all learners. We have used the Standards for Professional Learning to plan for and evaluate the district’s efforts to develop professional learning communities in our schools.

In 2007, I applied for and was accepted to the Learning Forward Academy — the first person in my district to take this step. I became immersed in a learning experience that transformed me as an instructional leader in my state and district. I also began to present at the Annual Conferences.

In 2011, I led the host conference committee for Learning Forward’s Summer Conference in Denver. For the first time, I saw the intentionality of the design that would bring powerful learning to educators attending the conference. In 2012, I was elected to the board of trustees and, in 2014, became president-elect.

As I reflect on my journey, I realize

I began as a consumer of what Learning Forward has to offer. As I grew and moved through the organization, I began to shift from just being a consumer to becoming a contributor. I believe that there is tremendous satisfaction as well as growth when you give back to an organization with a cause.

In addition to continuing my own growth, I am pleased to see new members continue their growth as effective leaders in education. Where



else do you see such transformation with diverse learners from across the world? This organization has allowed me to learn, grow, and give back — that’s why I’m Learning Forward. How about you? ■

Learning Forward appoints associate director of publications

Eric Celeste has joined Learning Forward as associate director of publications. Celeste will help coordinate Learning Forward's communication channels, primarily the member journal *JSD*, as well as the newsletter *Tools for Learning Schools* and the *Education Week*-hosted blog PD Watch.

Celeste comes to Learning Forward after a long career editing and writing in consumer magazines, with a recent focus on urban education. For the past 26 years, Celeste has managed print and digital editorial operations for various media, corporations, nonprofits, and political campaigns. Most recently, he was a senior editor for the American Airlines in-flight magazine *American Way*, as well as the city columnist for *D Magazine*, the city magazine of Dallas. It was at the city magazine where Celeste edited and wrote for an education blog, Learning Curve, in which he covered urban education issues.

"This position at Learning Forward combines the most



Eric Celeste

enjoyable aspects of my previous experience and combines them into one job," Celeste said. "It allows me to dig deep into issues facing educators, explain the characteristics of high-quality professional learning, and tell these stories in a way that will help teachers improve student outcomes."

"Eric brings a unique perspective to Learning Forward," said Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward. "His background as a media professional will help us communicate with a membership and a public that receives information in increasingly diverse ways. And his passion for telling stories about education that makes a difference for students will both inspire educators and prompt them to reflect upon their own practice."

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Standards Assessment Inventory available on Amplify

Learning Forward has released its Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) on the Amplify Professional Learning Maps platform. The partnership with Amplify — an industry leader in digital instruction, curriculum, and assessment — will provide schools and districts with an efficient and insightful method to determine the quality of professional learning their educators are receiving.

The Standards Assessment Inventory is a 50-item, web-enabled survey that includes questions on the nature of professional learning in teachers' schools and districts. The Amplify Professional Learning Maps platform aggregates survey responses to provide school, district, and state leaders with a visual representation of the quality of alignment of teach-

ers' professional learning with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.

Professional Learning Maps then suggests actionable next steps to improve practices, based on Learning Forward's extensive library of resources tied to specific opportunities for improvement.

"Professional Learning Maps places our Standards for Professional Learning into a very practical context," says Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward. "By efficiently aggregating educators' insights on their learning experiences, the platform will help school and district leaders improve the quality of the professional learning they provide and oversee."

"Learning Forward's survey, stan-

For an overview and demonstration of how you can make Professional Learning Maps work in the classroom, visit www.amplify.com/services/plm.

dards framework, and rich library of resources are a perfect fit for Professional Learning Maps," says Emily Lutrick, CEO of Professional Learning Maps at Amplify. "Our platform was designed to save teachers time and provide meaningful insights to school and district leaders. We are proud to partner with Learning Forward around their nationally recognized content."

FORT BEND ISD PARTNERS WITH LEARNING FORWARD

This spring, Learning Forward will launch a 10-month partnership with Fort Bend Independent School District in Texas to develop a comprehensive professional learning plan that will guide educator learning in the system.

Learning Forward senior consultant Linda Munger will facilitate the work of a professional learning task force made up of stakeholders across Fort Bend ISD. The task force will develop a comprehensive professional learning plan that establishes a vision and guiding principles for professional learning in the district, is grounded in the Standards for Professional Learning, and is focused on student and educator learning outcomes.

Fort Bend ISD, located in the Houston area, is the seventh-largest school district in Texas, serving more than 77,000 students.



LEARNING FORWARD'S VISION:

Excellent teaching and learning every day.

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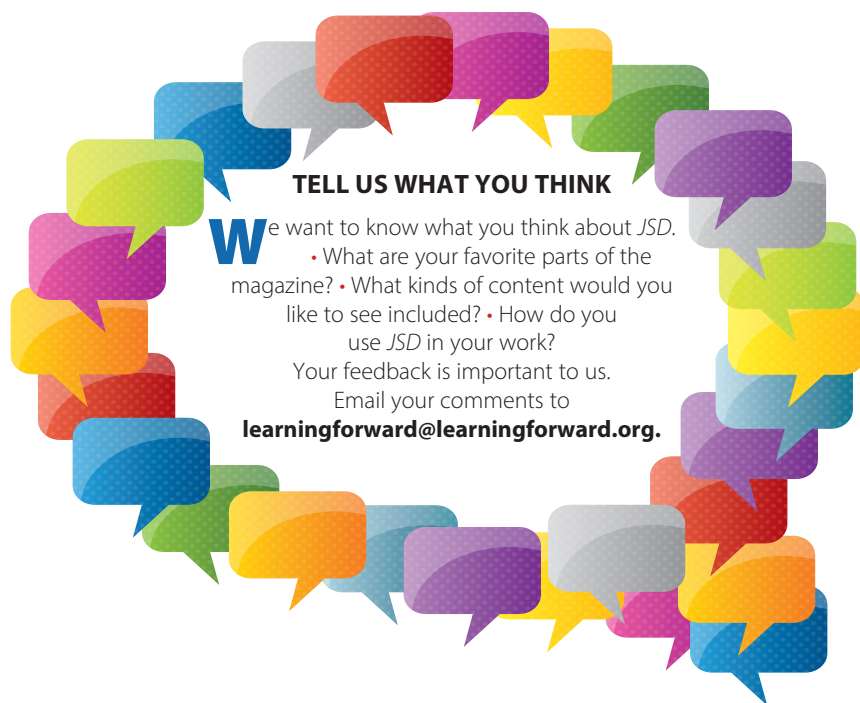
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LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- April 7:** Webinar: Creating Communities of Thought: Enhancing Social Capital.
- April 15:** Deadline for October 2016 *JSD* manuscripts. Theme: Equity.
- May 5:** Webinar: Differentiating the Flipped Classroom.
- May 15:** Deadline for December 2016 *JSD* manuscripts. Theme: Communities of practice.
- June 15:** Deadline for February 2017 *JSD* manuscripts. Theme: STEM.
- June 30:** Last day to save \$75 off registration for the 2016 Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- July 21-24:** Learning Forward Summer Institutes in Chicago, Illinois.
- Aug. 15:** Deadline for April 2017 *JSD* manuscripts. Theme: Measuring impact.
- Dec. 3-7:** Learning Forward Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.