



Photos by ANTHONY ARMSTRONG

Team Impact from Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland, left, and Massachusetts Teacher Policy Fellows present their proposals at the Agents for Learning Competition in Chicago.

TEAMS OUTLINE PLANS FOR ESSA FUNDS

Learning Forward and the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF) hosted Agents for Learning Competition finalists July 21-22 in Chicago. The 12 finalist teams presented their plans for the best use of federal funding for professional learning under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to a panel of judges.

Finalist teams included 55 educators representing 12 states. Teams had four minutes to present their plans to the judges panel, then received four minutes of feedback from the judges. Competition judges included Stephanie Banchemo, program director for the Education Program at the Joyce Foundation; Jahana Hayes, 2016 National Teacher of the Year; Chris Minnich, executive director of Council of Chief

State School Officers; and Rachel Wise, chair of the Nebraska Board of Education.

Finalists' presentations included an educator-informed theory of action around how to leverage professional learning to advance teaching and learning and specific recommendations for states, districts, and schools to consider as guides to their Consolidated State Plans and/or state and district Title II plans, a requirement of ESSA, and the design of effective professional learning in their systems.

"We're so grateful to all of the educators who participated in the challenge," said Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward. "We were proud to offer an opportunity to amplify teachers' voices in advocating for the professional learning that will make a difference for educators and students."

- Full list of the finalist teams, **p. 69**
- 4 themes in proposals, **p. 70**
- Individual team presentations at www.learningforward.org/get-involved/agents-for-learning-competition/essa-videos

FINALISTS IN THE AGENTS FOR LEARNING COMPETITION

●●●●●●●●●●
Trey Ferguson, Leesville Road High School, Raleigh, NC

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Cassie Reding, Stevenson Elementary, Russellville, KY

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Carly Baldwin, Boyd County High School, Ashland, KY

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Natalie Coleman, Shafer Middle School, Gallatin, TN

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Debbie Hickerson, Cason Lane Academy, Murfreesboro, TN

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Kelley Cusmano, Rochester High School, Rochester, MI

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Sarah Giddings, Washtenaw Alliance for Virtual Education, Ypsilanti, MI

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Heather Gauck, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, MI

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Matt McCullough, Schoolcraft Community Schools, Schoolcraft, MI

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Clara Carroll, Harding University, Searcy, AR

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Nancy Fancyboy, Beebe School District, Beebe, AR

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Lori Martin, Otter Creek Elementary, Little Rock, AR

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Leslie Sharp, Carnall Elementary School, Fort Smith, AR

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Deb Walter, Rogers New Tech High School, Rogers, AR

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Rebecca Wattleworth, Warrensburg-Latham High School, Warrensburg, IL

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Jennifer Smith, Monticello Middle School, Monticello, IL

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Jacob Carlson, Civic Memorial High School, Bethalto, IL

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Virginia Valdez, Minnie Mars Jamieson Elementary School, Chicago, IL

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Joseph Fatheree, Effingham High School, Effingham, IL

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Christina Jusino, Spark Academy, Lawrence, MA

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Jennifer Langdon, Hurley K-8 School, Boston, MA

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Desiree Darling, Spark Academy, Lawrence, MA

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Emily Banta, Lawrence Family Development Charter School, Lawrence, MA

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Tuyet Dinh, Mather Elementary, Dorchester, MA

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Michael Macchi, Phineas Bates Elementary, Roslindale, MA

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Alicia Serafin, Whittier Elementary School, Everett, MA

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Cheryl Corpus, Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning, Mount Pleasant, MI

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Gina Wilson, Early College Alliance @ EMU, Ypsilanti, MI

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Tina Harma, Kent Lake Elementary, South Lyon, MI

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Carrie Mattern, Carman-Ainsworth High School, Flint, MI

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Steven Fouts, Douglass Academy, Chicago, IL

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Lani Luo, Howe School of Excellence, Chicago, IL

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Gabrielle Pike, Burr Elementary, Chicago, IL

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Lynn Osborne-Simmons, Curie Metropolitan High School, Chicago, IL

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DeJernet Farder, Morton School of Excellence, Chicago, IL

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Ashley Karlsson, Washburn High School, Minneapolis, MN

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Amy Fettig, Ubah Medical Academy, Hopkins, MN

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Susan Boen, Washburn High School, Minneapolis, MN

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Maureen Torrez, La Mesa Elementary School, Albuquerque, NM

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Laura Burns, Kirtland Elementary School, Albuquerque, NM

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Kimberly Chavkin Moreno, George I. Sánchez Collaborative Community School, Albuquerque, NM

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Andrea Quintana, George I. Sánchez Collaborative Community School, Albuquerque, NM

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Stephen Rountree, Frederick Douglass High School, Upper Marlboro, MD

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Sonia Matthew, High Bridge Elementary School, Bowie, MD

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Kisha Dorch, Frederick Douglass High School, Upper Marlboro, MD

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Rodney Lewis II, Barack Obama Elementary School, Upper Marlboro, MD

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Julie Hughey, Prince George's County Public Schools, Upper Marlboro, MD

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Daniel Chu, Murray Hill Academy, New York, NY

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Christopher Nielsen, Murray Hill Academy, New York, NY

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Michael Lubing, Murray Hill Academy, New York, NY

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Miyilyn Parra-Innocent, Murray Hill Academy, New York, NY

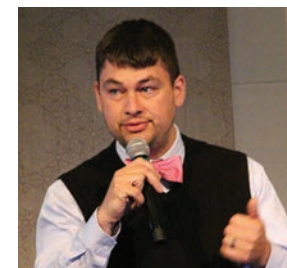
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Shelly Moore Krajacic, National Education Association, Madison, WI

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Amy Mizialko, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, Milwaukee, WI

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Ingrid Walker-Henry, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, Milwaukee, WI

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Chauna Perry Finch, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, Milwaukee, WI

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Heather Sattler, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, Milwaukee, WI



Matt McCullough is a member of the Michigan Catalysts for Teacher Leadership team.

4 THEMES EMERGE IN ESSA PROPOSALS

Applications for the Agents for Learning Competition (p. 68) revealed several themes that place teachers in leading roles in schools, professional learning leadership and advocacy. Here are a few trends identified across finalist team applications.

1. Teachers as leaders:

Many teams advocate for states and districts to develop career ladders or lattices to support increased teacher recruitment, retention,

2. Teachers as inquirers:

Many teams position teachers as researchers or inquirers, collaboratively and intentionally identifying and addressing their most pressing student needs. Several teams describe the importance

of cycles of continuous improvement led by teachers at the school level as the primary means of making professional learning authentic, teacher-driven, data-oriented, and job-embedded.

3. Teachers as experts:

Within the roles and structures that teams describe, teachers are typically recognized for their expertise and called upon to share that knowledge with their

colleagues. Schools will benefit when they create opportunities for teachers to observe each other teaching and reflect on and discuss what they see.

4. Amplify teacher voice:

Many teams stress the importance of consulting teachers on many aspects of school improvement and professional learning. Teachers have the best understanding of their own and students' learning needs.

Nebraska affiliate empowers change agents statewide

This year's winner of the Learning Forward Foundation's Affiliate Grant is Learning Forward Nebraska, under the direction of Chad Dumas.

The affiliate's three-year plan for professional learning proposes to expand Learning Forward's Executive Leadership Program to multiple sites

throughout Nebraska as a means to support education leaders who lack a critical understanding of change processes as well as effective facilitation skills for leading change.

To help bridge the implementation gap, the affiliate will develop a website to support "rigorous education designs of professional learning." In addition, the Learning Forward Nebraska board will build its capacity for advocating and supporting high-quality professional learning in order to empower

Nebraska educators to be change agents in their contexts.

As part of the grant, Learning Forward Nebraska will gather quantitative and qualitative data on participation in and implementation of learning from the Executive Leadership Program.

Learning Forward Foundation scholarships

The Learning Forward Foundation scholarship contest encourages educators to put their good ideas into action and apply their research and creativity to impact education's most profound challenges. For more information: www.learningforward.org/foundation.

APPLY FOR THE SHIRLEY HORD TEACHER LEARNING TEAM AWARD

Learning Forward is accepting applications for the 2016 Shirley Hord Teacher Learning Team Award.

The award honors a team of teachers that demonstrates excellence in professional learning. This annual award recognizes a school-based learning team that exhibits evidence of successful implementation of a cycle of continuous improvement that results in increased teaching effectiveness.

As part of the award process, applicants are asked to:

- Produce and submit a 10- to 12-minute video that shows evidence of the team implementing a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Include a letter of recommendation from the school principal that also describes how the principal supports the work of the learning team.
- Complete a brief, two-part essay describing the results the team hopes to achieve from its professional learning, the learning activities that help the team achieve these results, and evidence that the team is achieving results.

The winning team will receive a cash gift for its school to support collaborative professional learning, complimentary 2016 Annual Conference registrations to support team attendance at the conference, and a profile in *JSD* and on Learning Forward's website. In addition, the winning team will be honored at an Annual Conference general session.

Complete details on the application process, including the application form, are available at www.learningforward.org/get-involved/awards/hord-award.

The submission deadline is **Oct. 7, 2016**.



Intentional connections help bring rigorous content to life

In our district, we have realized the importance of creating intentional connections within and beyond our buildings so that everyone has the capacity to bring rigorous content to life and offer meaningful learning experiences for all students. These connections have served us well in achieving our goal of having every student experience STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) integrated throughout the math, science, and elective classrooms. Here are the connections we made and the lessons we learned along the way.

- **Bring key stakeholders together to construct a working definition and vision for STEM in your school or district.**

Stakeholders must include teachers, administrators, school board members, students, and parents. It is important that the group reach consensus throughout the process and leverage numerous resources to build a deep understanding of how STEM should look once fully implemented.

- **Pay attention to the process of change.**

Although the “S” and the “M” of STEM are firmly in place for school systems, using technology as a tool and bringing in the engineering design process can be a challenge.

- **Provide professional learning**

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

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for teachers, administrators, and school board members.

School-based administrators need to have a working understanding of how bringing together the four components of STEM unfold within the classroom. This should include a focus on how teachers engage within a teaching and learning cycle. In our district, we use the cycle of plan, teach, monitor, and adjust. The intentionality of this cycle can help administrators work closely with teachers.

Teachers are the most critical element in achieving the integration of STEM. My district has created cohorts of teachers working closely with an instructional coach to accomplish this task. Teachers attend classes during the summer to deepen their understanding of both the content and the pedagogy of each of the disciplines.

It has been our experience that the greatest need is helping teachers with the engineering design process. Inherently, teachers have focused on the idea of success. The concept of using failure to improve a system may not be new, but it requires a new skill set for teachers. This new way of teaching the engineering process must be addressed as teachers acquire new knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

- **Create community partnerships.**

We have turned to local museums, conservation areas, state parks, and other informal education providers. Start by building relationships with these groups and look for opportunities where their expertise and resources intersect with your needs.

For instance, last year, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science worked with close to 100 middle school teachers on Saturdays to deepen teachers' content knowledge. There are community members who can provide expertise and serve as audiences for student presentations or guest speakers.

We are also fortunate to connect with a group of educators throughout Colorado known as the Colorado Science Education Network. This group, which includes K-12 educators, higher education, and other educational institutions, meets monthly to share, learn, and provide a sense of cohesion among the experiences for Colorado children. The opportunities from this type of collaboration are immense.

- **Continue to connect with all stakeholders.**

Communicate regularly with parents, students, community members, school boards, teachers, and administrators about the challenges and successes of moving to STEM-centered instruction. Making this a priority early in the process will allow for opportunities to collect artifacts, testimonials, and data to monitor the changes and the implementation. ■



THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

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

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COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP:
Six Influences That Matter Most

By Peter M. DeWitt

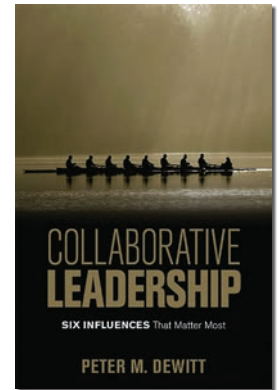
What type of leadership do you practice? If your answer is transformational or instructional, you're not alone. Many of us rely on these tenets. But there are better advantages in applying a holistic angle including all stakeholders — an approach known as collaborative leadership.

Peter DeWitt unpacks six leadership factors in *Collaborative Leadership*, all framed through the lens of John Hattie's research. Adding insight, practical experiences, and vignettes, DeWitt paints a powerful scheme: Meet stakeholders where they are, motivate stakeholders to strive for improvement, and model how to do it. The meet, motivate, and model blueprint will inspire you to:

- Transform your leadership practice;
- Identify where you can make immediate changes;
- Build and empower your leadership team; and
- Incorporate all stakeholders into the conversation.

Designed to shape collective teacher efficacy and foster teacher voice, *Collaborative Leadership* will leave you motivated to work together.

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



TROUBLE LOGGING IN?

Learning Forward has updated the login process on the organization's website.

Members now sign in with their email address instead of member ID and will need to create a new password. To create a new password:

- Select "forgot/reset password" on the member login page.
- Look for an email from Learning

Forward with instructions for resetting your password.

- Follow the instructions for resetting the password.
- Log in again using your new password.

Members only need to do this process once as part of this upgrade.

If you need help, contact the business office at office@learningforward.org or 800-727-7288.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- Oct. 1:** Last day to save \$50 off registration for the 2016 Annual Conference.
- Oct. 7:** Deadline for applications for the 2016 Shirley Hord Teacher Learning Team Award.
- Oct. 15:** Deadline for the April 2017 issue of *JSD*. Theme: Measuring impact.
- Dec. 2-4:** Learning Forward Academy Class of 2018 meets at Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- Dec. 3-7:** 2016 Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.