

## **THE COLLABORATIVE COMPACT:**

Operating principles lay the groundwork for successful group work.

*By Robert J. Garmston and Diane P. Zimmerman*

When leaders know how to facilitate with elegance and intervene to maintain engagement, they teach by example and create smart collaborators. Accordingly, group members learn to manage their own behavior and support their colleagues in thinking together. Leaders can accelerate collaboration by creating collaborative compacts — a set of agreements on how group members work together, think together, work with conflicts, and manage their own behavior.

## **ALL ABOARD!:**

In one Iowa district, all teachers and principals are on the same journey.

*By Deb Hansen, Colleen Anderson, Linda Munger, and Mitzi Chizek*

Every teacher and principal in the Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District near Des Moines, Iowa, participates in collaborative learning teams to study a process known as assessment for learning, in which formative assessment practices provide students with clear learning targets, examples and models of strong and weak work, regular descriptive feedback, and the ability to self-assess, track learning, and set goals. Teacher practice has improved, and achievement results demonstrate the initiative's impact on students.

## **A TUNE-UP FOR STYMIED TEAMS:**

When a group's focus falters, take steps to get back on track.

*By Renee Hesson*

Even the most efficient team of teachers can become ineffective. Conversely, even the most ineffective team can be made more efficient and productive. The keys to refocusing a committed team on the instructional goals originally established by the group are through reality, relationships, and reflection. These critical components of effective collaboration guide a renewed commitment to assist students to achieve desired learning outcomes.

## **STRONG TEAMS, STRONG SCHOOLS:**

Teacher-to-teacher collaboration creates synergy that benefits students.

*By Dennis Sparks*

Schools will improve for the benefit of every student only when every leader and every teacher is a member

of one or more strong teams that create synergy in problem solving, provide emotional and practical support, distribute leadership to better tap the talents of members of the school community, and promote the interpersonal accountability that is necessary for continuous improvement. Such teamwork not only benefits students, it also enables teachers to thrive and address the complex challenges of their work.

## **CREATE A LEARNING TEAM ROAD MAP:**

A well-designed plan is flexible and focused on the team's goal.

*By Anne Jolly*

A team plan is the beginning route that team members agree to follow to reach a shared goal. As a starting point for learning teams' work, the plan can help teachers get to know one another as professionals and build relationships. Developing a good plan requires thoughtful reflection and discussion. Team members must spend time exploring ideas, examining different strategies for reaching the goal, and deliberating on which approaches they will use.

## **YOU'VE BEEN EVALUATED. NOW WHAT?:**

Use results to pump up professional learning's potential.

*By Stephanie Hirsh*

Individual teachers working on their own examining evaluation feedback will have valuable information to inform individual improvement. However, teacher evaluations have the potential to achieve more, and to do it more quickly, when they are part of a comprehensive professional learning system tied to a school district's and a school's improvement goals for students. A four-step process outlines how teachers can use evaluation results for improvement.

## **LEARNING TO BE A COMMUNITY:**

Schools need adaptable models to create successful programs.

*By Bradley A. Ermeling and Ronald Gallimore*

Some districts and schools are struggling to translate inspiring case stories into successful programs in their own contexts. The learning communities movement is at a crossroads, in danger of relying too much on inspirational examples and overly general implementation models. The next generation of professional learning communities needs implementation plans flexible enough to adapt to local conditions but sufficiently specific that educators aren't reinventing the wheel.

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## features

### USING DATA

#### **WHAT THE RIGHT DATA CAN DO:**

Find sources that can help tailor learning to each educator’s needs.

*By Edie Holcomb*

Learning Forward’s Data standard advocates using data from a variety of sources and types — including student, educator, and system data — to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning. But rarely are the data gathered connected directly to plans for professional learning, nor does it necessarily meet educators’ needs. By using student, educator, and system data that provide critical information to customize planning, every educator is *learning* — not just attending the same events as everyone else.

### SCHOOL TURNAROUND

#### **A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP:**

Principal and external provider lead the turnaround at a low-performing urban school.

*By Maryann Marrapodi and Ora Beard*

Dixon Educational Learning Academy in Detroit, Mich., was a low-performing urban school with frequent leadership turnover, demoralized staff, and episodic and irrelevant professional learning. Led by an experienced principal and an external partner, the school is turning the corner using a data-informed instructional improvement process to guide professional learning and support rigorous, standards-based teaching in every content area and every classroom.

### LEARNING FORWARD ACADEMY

#### **DEEP IMPACT:**

A Learning Forward Academy graduate inspires learning in her district.

*By Shirley Hord, Janice Bradley, and Patricia Roy*

Karla McAdam was the winner of a Learning Forward Foundation scholarship that allowed her to attend Learning Forward Academy, where she invested in 2½ years of thoughtful and stimulating interaction and learning with colleagues around the nation and beyond. As a result of her experience, McAdam changed her approach to the work she does with schools — and influenced learning for the principals, teachers, and students in her district.

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## columns

#### **Collaborative culture:**

Ask questions, rather than dispense advice, to transform conversations into teachable moments.

*By Susan Scott, Deli Moussavi-Bock, Janet Hagstrom Irving, and Lisa Bresnehan*

An inquiry-based approach allows students to come up with and embrace their own solutions, gives them confidence, and helps them gain an ability to name their emotions so they can get ahead of them.

#### **From the director:**

Raise expectations as well as support for the time we set aside for collaboration.

*By Stephanie Hirsh*

Ensuring education leaders have collaboration skills to facilitate the ongoing development of social capital is essential to ongoing improvements and lasting success.

## Writing for JSD

- Themes for the 2014 publication year will be posted soon at [www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes).
- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure ([christy.colclasure@learningforward.org](mailto:christy.colclasure@learningforward.org)).
- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at [www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines).