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**Sandler Foundation Supports Professional Learning for Higher Levels  
of Learning for All Students through Implementation of  
Common Core State Standards and Readiness for New Assessments**

DALLAS—August 23, 2011— Learning Forward has received a \$500,000 grant from Sandler Foundation to launch *Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: Implementing the Common Core*. This two-year initiative will lead a statewide, comprehensive professional learning system that supports educators as they implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and new student assessments.

CCSS and new assessments are intended to prepare all students to be college and career ready at the end of their pre-K-12 education and will necessitate different learning experiences and environments for students. Because the standards focus on students' construction of new knowledge and application of learning in authentic situations, teachers will need to employ instructional strategies that integrate critical and creative thinking, collaboration, problem solving, research and inquiry skills, and presentation or demonstration skills.

Sandler Foundation is committed to increasing opportunity for students who are currently underserved in schools. "We have an opening to prepare all of our students to be critical thinkers with the skills needed to solve the pressing problems we face," said Susan Sandler of Sandler Foundation, "but the potential of the Common Core State Standards and assessments can only be realized through a serious commitment to professional development."

"Full implementation of Common Core State Standards and readiness for new student assessments require that all school-based educators expand their expertise to produce high-level learning for all students," said Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward. "This calls for new forms of professional learning that engage educators in the same learning experiences they will create for their students. We cannot expect to realize the promise of Common Core with old models of professional learning. These new standards and assessments require us to rethink the entire system from policy to practice."

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Working in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers and with support from the National Governors Association, National Association of State Boards of Education, and American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Learning Forward will select a Demonstration State in which to transform professional learning and create a comprehensive system, guided by policy and modeled through practice, that spans from the statehouse to the classroom. Five Critical Friend States will serve as contributors and critics of the work in the Demonstration State.

***About Learning Forward***

Learning Forward's purpose is ensuring that every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves. Learning Forward is a nonprofit, international association of learning educators focused on increasing student achievement through more effective professional learning. For more information about the impact of high-quality professional learning, visit [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org).

***About Sandler Foundation***

Sandler Foundation is a national foundation that works to improve quality of life. It seeks to promote education policy changes that support high-quality learning environments where learning is meaningful, substantive, and relevant to individual and societal needs and interests. The foundation focuses on equitable educational policies that create effective systems for effectively reaching students who are currently least well-served by the school system.

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