



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Learning Forward Releases Book Based on School Improvement Work in Fort Wayne Community Schools**

***Becoming a Learning System offers tools, strategies, and knowledge to develop continuous improvement systems.***

**Dallas** (August 7, 2014) – Learning Forward, the nation’s largest professional learning membership association, is pleased to join Fort Wayne Community Schools (FWCS) in celebrating their successful efforts to build effective leadership and learning systems that lead to improved outcomes for all students.

Learning Forward has just released a new book that showcases the learning framework that has propelled Fort Wayne Community Schools’ improvement work. *Becoming a Learning System* includes the voices of FWCS educators along with practical tools, strategies, and the research background to understand what it means when every educator in a school district is intently focused on learning.

“In a learning system, every educator in the district commits to continuous learning, for themselves, their peers, and the educators they support in a range of roles,” said Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh. “The work we’ve done in partnership with Fort Wayne Community Schools has demonstrated what ongoing professional learning can accomplish. The importance of sustained support and knowledgeable leadership is critical to creating such a system and I commend Superintendent Dr. Robinson for her commitment to learning for all educators in Fort Wayne Community Schools,” said Hirsh.

“Participating in this book was a natural progression of the work we have done with Learning Forward,” Fort Wayne Community Schools Superintendent Dr. Wendy Robinson said. “We have used

Learning Forward's processes and strategies to change our processes at the district level. In the past, we have focused on the school and classroom level, which are important. But those levels can't improve if the district does not have strong processes in place to support what happens in the classroom. Working with Learning Forward helped us align our strategies from the boardroom to the classroom."

*Becoming a Learning System* was authored by Hirsh along with Frederick Brown and Kay Psencik. Brown, Learning Forward's deputy executive director, and Psencik, Learning Forward senior consultant, have worked hand-in-hand with school and system leaders in FWCS over the last few years to facilitate the implementation of the learning and leadership work.

"Our Board has worked hard to set clear goals which govern our work from the boardroom to the classroom," said Mark GiaQuinta, President of the FWCS Board of School Trustees. "We stress continuous improvement because we know that we can always do better and because each year brings a new group of students with new challenges. The Board, Administration and teaching professionals work together as a team to ensure that all students are educated to high standards. Our teamwork and shared vision of academic achievement has benefitted our students, their parents and the community, whose support for public education is crucial."

The book and the work implemented in FWCS are based on Learning Forward's definition of professional learning and Standards for Professional Learning, which together offer district leaders a framework to guide daily decisions that promote continuous improvement. The book outlines the knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors district leaders need to lead, facilitate, and coach school leaders and leadership teams to embed the definition and standards into schools' daily routines.

Purchase the book through Learning Forward's online bookstore at <https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?>

Learning Forward will host a two-day master class in Indianapolis Oct. 14-15 to help educators in the region develop an understanding of learning systems. Based on the book, the *Becoming a Learning System* master class will offer participants the opportunity to understand the roles, processes, and elements of a culture that make learning systems possible. Learn more about the institute at <http://learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/becoming-a-learning-system-master-class>.

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*Learning Forward is the only association focused solely on the most critical lever in improving schools-- building the knowledge and skills of educators. Through the Standards for Professional Learning, Learning Forward leads the field in understanding what links professional learning to improved student*

*achievement. We assist classroom, school, and system leaders in solving their toughest problems of practice. To learn more, visit [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org).*

*With nearly 31,000 students, Fort Wayne Community Schools is one of the largest school districts in Indiana. FWCS proudly allows families to choose any of its 51 schools through its successful school-choice program creating diversity in each school, including some with more than 75 languages spoken. FWCS offers seven magnet schools focusing on areas such as science and math, communication, fine arts or Montessori at the elementary and middle school level. In high school, students can choose from the prestigious International Baccalaureate program, Project Lead the Way or New Tech Academy as well as other rigorous academic and specialty training programs.*