

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**For Learning Forward:**  
Joyce Pollard  
512-699-7541  
joyce.pollard@learningforward.org

**Learning Forward and 8 Galveston County School Districts Kick Off Houston  
Endowment-Funded “Learning Leaders” Program**  
*Initiative Begins for Improved Teaching & Learning*

Dallas, Texas – Sept. 24, 2015 — Learning Forward, the professional learning association, is proud to announce that its three-year Galveston County Learning Leaders initiative, which is funded by a \$420,000 grant from the Houston Endowment, began last Thursday in Santa Fe ISD with eight Galveston County superintendents and their leadership teams who plan to improve teaching and learning across the county.

“Classroom instruction and school leadership are the two strongest factors influencing student success. We are honored to partner with the Houston Endowment and the leaders of participating Galveston County school districts (Dickinson, Clear Lake, Friendswood, High Island, Hitchcock, LaMarque, Santa Fe, and Texas City) to help members of the Initiative address their specific system improvement issues and collaboratively build their capacity to strengthen district operations and support principals,” said Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward executive director.

During the first meeting members shared their goals and expectations as well as their responsibilities to the group. They will continue work throughout the fall. According to Project Director Kay Psencik, Learning Forward will give participants coaching and customized support in a learning community structure, which will enable them to solve their immediate challenges while they build a base of shared knowledge about professional learning that is continuous, collaborative, job-embedded, and focused on student learning. Learning Forward has successfully used that structure to help superintendents in other states build strong district professional learning systems for their schools.

Psencik explained that by working with leadership teams from multiple diverse districts, Learning Forward will strengthen the existing network of superintendents and central office leadership in the region so they can sustain support for one another beyond the grant period.

“Taking a systemic approach toward achieving their district priorities allows district leaders to lead by modeling what they want to see in their schools. As they change how they work with principal professional learning, principal supervisors begin to see principals engage differently with teachers around their learning,” she said. “They create a

chain of action that makes a positive impact on their practices and the learning of their students,” Psenick concluded.

###

Learning Forward is a nonprofit, international membership association of learning educators committed to one vision in K–12 education: Excellent teaching and learning every day. To realize that vision Learning Forward pursues its mission to build the capacity of leaders to establish and sustain highly effective professional learning. Information about membership, services, and products is available from [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org).