

## FOCUS

### RETHINKING EARLY EDUCATION

#### Building a better preschool:

Specialized professional learning is key to high-quality early education.

By *Eric Celeste*

We've been talking about the unique aspects of professional learning for early education teachers for a long time, but many of the challenges are still largely the same. Two crucial challenges of professional learning for early education are teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning, especially keeping up with brain science and social-emotional research. The progress being made in pockets across the country is just the first step toward a system of professional training, learning, and monitoring that can lead to improved outcomes for all students in early education.

#### A foundation of learning:

D.C. program addresses achievement gap for 3- and 4-year-olds.

By *Natasha Parrilla and Kelly Trygstad*

Every teacher has experienced the achievement gap in his or her classroom at some point and not known what to do. Instructional leaders face the challenge of supporting teachers to close this gap, and a variety of research-based philosophies and strategies in the field address this challenge. AppleTree Institute for Education



Innovation, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., is working to close the achievement gap before children enter kindergarten by providing 3- and 4-year-olds with the social, emotional, and academic foundations that enable them to thrive in school — and increasing educator effectiveness is a critical component of that.

#### Teach, watch, learn:

Early education program pairs college courses with video coaching.

By *Alan Cohen*

EarlyEdU Alliance, a collection of courses and online tools led by the University of Washington and used by more than 50 colleges and universities, aims to increase the quality of early childhood teacher preparation programs and make them more accessible and affordable for a workforce that needs more people and requires more of

them. EarlyEdU offers a series of courses that combine theory and the latest research with students' field-based learning. Integrated into each course is a video sharing and coaching feedback app called Coaching Companion.

#### Preschool is school:

Early childhood educators need relevant, collaborative, and aligned learning.

By *Zeke Alejandro, Sarah Garland, Suzanne Kennedy, and Thomas Van Soelen*

In terms of professional learning, early childhood educators are either lumped in with other elementary school teachers or left in their center. It is in those poignant moments when the inequity is clear between early learning and K-12 educators. At the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center in Decatur, Georgia, educators get the same high-quality professional learning as their K-12 counterparts.

### WRITE FOR THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

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### SHARE YOUR STORY

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- First-person accounts of change efforts;
- Practitioner-focused articles about

school- and district-level initiatives;

- Program descriptions and results from schools, districts, or external partners;
- How-tos from practitioners and thought leaders; and
- Protocols and tools with guidance on use and application.

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## IDEAS

### Unlocking the secrets of agency:

New Teacher Induction Program empowers educator-centered growth.

By Juliet Correll

Arlington ISD in Texas is a district with the ambitious goal that 100% of students will graduate prepared for college, career, and citizenship. The New Teacher Induction Program is a vehicle to foster individual agency for each teacher and empower educator-centered growth, intentionally modeling the same kind of learning designs that teachers apply with students in their classrooms. The district seeks enhanced coherence around professional learning across the system, from teacher and principal leadership and learning to the central office and the larger community, to achieve collective efficacy and improve outcomes for students.

### Principal communities of practice inspire learning in Texas district.

By Steven Ebell, Holly Hughes, Scott Bockart, Susan Silva, and Stephanie McBride

In 2015, leaders in Clear Creek Independent School District in Texas began the strategic shift in culture and thinking from one of competition to one of collaboration. And this is where the learning began. In July 2016, with a foundational understanding of a learning system, Clear Creek district leaders launched 12 communities of practice for principals tightly bound by a shared problem of practice. The success experienced by school and department leaders has deepened the belief among district leadership that this is the right path for all improvement efforts.

## VOICES

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shannon Bogle, supervisor, teacher training, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida.



### CALL TO ACTION

#### Make the connection between Learning Forward's standards and ESSA.

By Stephanie Hirsh

A crosswalk demonstrating how they align will assist states and districts to see the similarities and accelerate the application of both.

### OUR TAKE

#### New report and tool kit build momentum for effective professional learning.

By Elizabeth Foster

A new report from Learning Policy Institute supports Learning Forward's theory of action that collaborative, job-embedded professional learning changes teaching practice and results for students for the better.

### ASK

#### How do we clarify coaches' roles and responsibilities?

By Tom Manning

Review the 10 roles for school-based coaches and the essential purpose of each role.

### WHAT I'VE LEARNED

#### Support for educators leads to learning gains for students.

By David I. Steinberg

While focusing on goals and measuring progress toward meeting them is necessary, what's needed is one additional ingredient: support.

### BEING FORWARD

#### Highlights from the past year show strategic priorities in action.

By Scott Laurence

These strategic priorities demonstrate how Learning Forward is responding to the needs of its members and stakeholders while also addressing issues in the field of education and professional learning.

## RESEARCH

### RESEARCH REVIEW

#### Critical questions remain unanswered in research on teacher leadership.

By Joellen Killian

Research on teacher leadership shows promise but insufficient empirical evidence of its benefits and supports.

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