

ABSTRACTS

February 2018, Vol. 39, No. 1

FOCUS

LEARNING LEADERS FOR LEARNING SYSTEMS

A symphony of skills:

Here's what it takes to learn in concert with others.

By Lyn Sharratt and Beate Planche

The success of schools as learning organizations hinges on how well people can work together as they seek to build collective capacity and problem solve to improve student outcomes. Collaborative learning has now emerged as the vital strategy for learning — both for staff and students. The authors focus on two questions: What kind of capabilities do collaborative leaders need to work together with others? And how do we nurture needed skills and dispositions so that all leaders can improve over time?

Even superheroes need help:

Principals who share leadership have greater impact on student achievement.

By Mel Sussman

A difficult step for principals is acknowledging that they cannot do it alone and that shared leadership is key to increasing student achievement. When the school-level leader can accept relinquishing parts of his or her authority and comes to the realization

that there is far greater strength in numbers, then the shared leadership process — rooted in the formation of a collectively efficacious instructional leadership team — can begin. So how does a principal make shared leadership a reality? Eight crucial steps ensure the success of a leadership team.

Lasting legacies:

Kentucky superintendents create success strategies that reach into the future.

By Michael Chirichello

A legacy of leadership is more than a bench, as demonstrated by six Kentucky school superintendents who share a common commitment to providing a resource for continuous professional learning for district superintendents. The six leaders met at the end of their doctorate of education program at Northern Kentucky University to contribute strategies for what they hoped would be an integral part of their leadership legacy in their districts.

Power up your planning:

A well-defined theory of action leads to systemwide change.

By Sharon Williams and Karen Cloninger

Through a clearly articulated theory of action, the West Linn-Wilsonville School District in Oregon has done

what few other districts succeed at doing: Balancing the learning needs of everyone in the system to produce impressive results. The theory of action anchors the leadership team's three-pronged approach to professional learning: Align work by nesting teacher, school, and district goals; ensure fidelity of implementation by organizing learning in authentic, job-embedded contexts; and motivate staff with professional learning that inspires and provides meaning.



WRITE FOR THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

- Themes are posted at www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes.
- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure (christy.colclasure@learningforward.org).
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The Learning Professional publishes a range of types of articles, including:

- 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.

To learn more about key topics and what reviewers look for in article submissions, visit www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines.



IDEAS

The perfect mix:

With blended professional learning, learners choose time, place, path, and pace.

By Amie Cieminski and Deagan Andrews

The Greeley-Evans School District in Colorado began moving toward innovation several years ago as district leaders searched for ways to improve student achievement, leverage technology, and stay within a very limited budget. In 2014, district leaders created a five-year blended learning implementation plan. The district designed professional learning that aligned with blended learning principles, allowing leaders to experience the kinds of learning they were expected to support for students in their buildings.

How curriculum and professional learning intersect.

By Stephanie Hirsh and Frederick Brown

The intersection of curriculum and professional learning is a hot issue in the field right now. Two articles illuminate key points. In the first, Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh takes a close look at the work school-based learning teams do in studying their curriculum materials to improve capacity and refine teaching. The second, by Learning Forward Deputy Executive Director Frederick Brown, examines the role of leadership in implementing high-quality curriculum in Wake County Public School System in North Carolina.

VOICES

CALL TO ACTION

Whatever name you give it, the PLC plays an important role.

By Stephanie Hirsh

When a school district prioritizes a culture of collaborative professionalism, it invests in building the professional capital of all staff. Three core elements are essential to learning teams' success.

OUR TAKE

Symposium explores ways to turn exemplars of excellence into learning systems.

By Melinda George

At a symposium on the future of the learning profession, participants from more than 20 organizations explored what it takes to create and support educators in building an authentic learning profession and what the United States can learn from other high-performing countries. Themes that resonated were teacher efficacy, teacher voice, and the critical leadership that creates the conditions that allow the profession to grow and strengthen.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Kimberly Honnick

A champion for learning keeps students front and center.

New Jersey principal Kimberly

Honnick, in her 26th year in public education, is facing more challenges than ever. Support and guidance from the Learning Forward Foundation has made a difference in her work.

BEING FORWARD

Let's work together to keep moving forward.

By Alan Ingram

The challenges ahead for all of us will require a total team effort, adaptive and innovative solutions, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to excellence in moving professional learning systems beyond the status quo.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

Respectful disagreement closes the gap between points of view.

By Robert Garmston and Kendall Zoller

Educators, more than in most professions, have an opportunity — actually, a responsibility — to practice and model constructive ways of disagreeing. Here are effective methods to make that happen.

RESEARCH

RESEARCH REVIEW:

Design principles guide educators in choosing and using curriculum materials.

By Elizabeth Foster

This study sheds light on which particular educative features teachers respond to while also underlining the idea that teachers do, in fact, respond to such features. How teachers choose and use educative features in instructional materials led the authors to develop six design principles.

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