



Photo by BULLHORN MEDIA for Learning Forward

Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh speaks at the Learning Forward 2017 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

## LEARNING FORWARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEPHANIE HIRSH TO RETIRE

**S**tephanie Hirsh, who has served as Learning Forward's executive director since 2007, will retire on June 30, 2019.

"Under Stephanie Hirsh's leadership, Learning Forward has expanded its influence among many education stakeholders, from practitioners to thought leaders to policymakers," said Alan Ingram, Learning Forward president. "Because of the strategic direction that Stephanie and her leadership team have

established, we are better equipped than ever before to continue to serve educators," said Ingram.

Hirsh joined the then-National Staff Development Council (NSDC) in 1988 as deputy executive director. Hirsh has contributed to every aspect of the organization during her tenure, including facilitating the first class of the Learning Forward Academy, coordinating the Annual Conference, writing books, and securing philanthropic support from several

foundations and organizations.

Hirsh began her career in education as a social studies teacher, then became an administrator in the Richardson (Texas) Independent School District. In 1996, she was elected to the Richardson school board and served for three terms.

Through the course of Hirsh's leadership as executive director, Learning Forward's significant milestones include:

**The most recent revision of the Standards for Professional Learning,**

now adopted or adapted in more than 35 states. Developed in conjunction with more than 40 partner associations and organizations, the standards influence the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning in schools and districts.

**The development of a rigorous definition of professional learning** included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Learning Forward’s advocacy achievements also elevated educator voices in demanding and securing full funding for Title IIA of ESSA, the primary federal source of funding for professional learning in the U.S.

**The establishment of several educator networks and communities of practice** that address longstanding adult and student learning challenges.

**The evolution of the organization’s focus to ensure Learning Forward** is positioned to serve all students and all educators, including a recent shift to promote the intersection of high-quality instructional materials and professional learning.

**Massive growth in Learning Forward’s consulting services division**, which offers direct support to school systems and states.

At its core, Learning Forward remains a membership association with a range of benefits from publications to learning programs and conferences, and relies on its members to serve as champions for learning in their spheres of influence.

“As a lifelong learner in a learning

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organization, my greatest lessons have come from our members. I talk to educators daily who help me understand the urgency of Learning Forward’s mission and who inspire me to seek the most effective pathways for supporting the work they do with students,” said Hirsh.

“When I embraced the role of executive director in 2007, I thought it would take about 10 years to accomplish the things I wanted to and I’m proud of our achievements. It’s time for someone else to have the opportunity to lead this amazing organization,” continued Hirsh. “My passion to advance the causes most important to me hasn’t diminished. I’m excited to find balance among family, community, and education. I will continue to be a champion for individuals and initiatives that advance professional learning in meaningful ways.”

Hirsh has been married to her husband, Mike, for more than 40 years. They have a son, Brian, and a daughter, Leslie, who is an assistant principal in the Dallas area. “I’m really looking forward to spending more time with my family, including my beautiful granddaughter and one more we will welcome in September,” said Hirsh.

Learning Forward has retained an executive search firm to lead the search for a new executive director. ■

## LEARNING FORWARD TO HOST CAPITOL HILL BRIEFING ON TITLE IIA

**L**earning Forward will host a special Capitol Hill briefing this fall that will bring together nationally recognized professional development expert practitioners to show Congress, the Trump administration, and K-12 education stakeholders how school districts are using funding from Title IIA of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

This panel will focus on how Title IIA-supported initiatives in instructional coaching, mentoring, and team teaching are making a difference in teacher practice and student outcomes.

Title IIA of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the only federal funding dedicated to professional learning. Over the past two years, both the Trump administration and Congress have attempted to eliminate this funding altogether.

Thanks to the efforts of educators across the country — many of whom are Learning Forward members — funding was restored in Fiscal Year 2018 and is looking more promising for Fiscal Year 2019. However, our advocacy work is not done.

Educators need to make the case in favor of continued and increased funding for professional learning. To do this, we need to demonstrate the impact that Title II and the professional learning supported by Title II are having on educators and students.

Details about the briefing will be posted on the Learning Forward website at <https://learningforward.org/get-involved/advocacy/title-ii-advocacy>.