

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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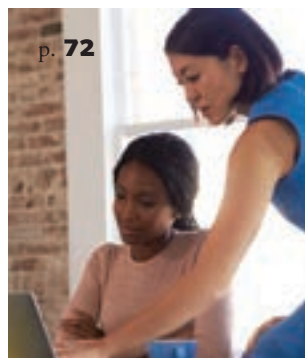
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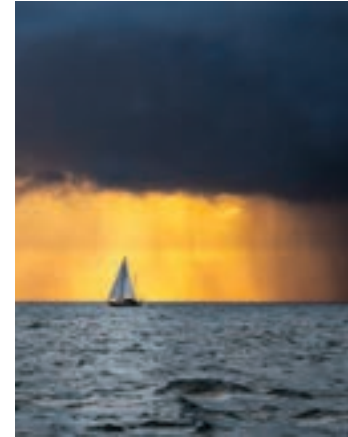
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I SAY

Margaret J. Wheatley

Writer and management consultant



"I know it is possible for leaders to use their power and influence, their insight and compassion, to lead people back to an understanding of who we are as human beings, to create the conditions for our basic human qualities of generosity, contribution, community, and love to be evoked no matter what. I know it is possible to experience grace and joy in the midst of tragedy and loss. I know it is possible to create islands of sanity in the midst of wildly disruptive seas. I know it is possible because I have worked with leaders over many years in places that knew chaos and breakdown long before this moment. And I have studied enough history to know that such leaders always arise when they are most needed. Now it's our turn."

Source: Wheatley, M.J. (2017). *Who do we choose to be?: Facing reality, claiming leadership, restoring sanity* (p. 8). Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.



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For more information on Learning Forward's Coaches Academy, contact Tom Manning at tom.manning@learningforward.org.



HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

Life is full of transitions,
and so are schools

Many years ago, when I relocated to begin graduate school, I wondered aloud to my family, “When do I get to stop starting over?” My mother was compassionate but blunt: “I hate to tell you this,” she said, “but never.”

Of course, we rarely start over entirely, but life is full of transitions, and so are schools. In this issue of *The Learning Professional*, we celebrate transitions and examine the challenges and opportunities they create for professional learning. This is a fitting moment for us at Learning Forward to reflect on turning points as our organization begins its 50th year and prepares for a leadership transition later this year.

No doubt many of you are experiencing professional and personal transitions as well. Almost a quarter of principals change jobs in a given year, and 8% of teachers change schools. Administrators and coaches hire and support about 90,000 new teachers a year (NCES, 2015; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

According to our most recent member survey, 24% of Learning Forward members have been in their current jobs for less than two years. Not all of these transitions are problematic; many of them reflect a commitment to continued professional growth. In fact, career ladders are an intentional strategy for nurturing education leaders and retaining excellent educators in the profession.

Our members often tell us they find *The Learning Professional* and other Learning Forward resources to be indispensable when they transition to new professional roles. They talk about the opportunity to learn from peers grappling with similar challenges in other districts, exposure to topics they haven’t previously recognized as important to their work, and the value of tools for planning, assessing, and reflecting on their professional growth in their new position.

Many of our readers initially become members because they are responsible for the professional learning of others, in roles such as instructional coaching, curriculum development, and staff supervision. But professional learning remains important in every educational role and during every career transition. Consider the following ways professional learning resources can be useful.

- A director of professional development who becomes an assistant superintendent learns how to connect professional learning content and methods with overarching district goals, such as improving the quality and implementation of curricula and supporting staff retention.
- A teacher leader who shifts roles to work in a nonprofit organization stays current with the latest challenges school staff are facing and how nonprofits

are building schools’ capacity to address them.

- A district leader who is elected to state or national office continually upgrades his ability to advocate for professional learning.

If your career path curves away from a day-to-day focus on professional learning, we hope you will stay connected with us and seize the opportunity to remain grounded in how educators are building their capacity to help all students succeed.

As you transition to new roles and tackle new challenges, let us know the topics and questions on your mind. How can we support you as you build new knowledge? And how can we learn from and share the knowledge you are gaining?

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Suzanne Bouffard (suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org) is editor of *The Learning Professional*. ■

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STAFF

Executive editor: Tracy Crow
Editor: Suzanne Bouffard
Managing editor: Sue Chevalier
Designer: Kitty Black

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BUSINESS OFFICE

504 S. Locust St.
Oxford, OH 45056
513-523-6029, 800-727-7288
Fax: 513-523-0638
office@learningforward.org
www.learningforward.org

LEARNING FORWARD STAFF

Stephanie Hirsh

Executive director
stephanie.hirsh@learningforward.org

Frederick Brown

Deputy executive director
frederick.brown@learningforward.org

Anthony Armstrong

Associate director of marketing and communications
anthony.armstrong@learningforward.org

Suzanne Bouffard

Associate director of publications
suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org

Tracy Crow

Director of communications
tracy.crow@learningforward.org

Elizabeth Foster

Associate director of standards, research, and strategy
elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org

Carrie Freundlich

Associate director of conferences and meetings
carrie.freundlich@learningforward.org

Melinda George

Director of policy and partnerships
melinda.george@learningforward.org

Michael Lanham

Chief operating officer
michael.lanham@learningforward.org

Michelle Bowman

Associate director of communities
michelle.bowman@learningforward.org

Tom Manning

Associate director of consulting and networks
tom.manning@learningforward.org

Renee Taylor-Johnson

Associate director of business services
renee.taylor-johnson@learningforward.org

Carol François

Learning ambassador
carol.francois@learningforward.org

Shirley Hord

Scholar laureate
shirley.hord@learningforward.org

Joellen Killion

Senior advisor
joellen.killion@learningforward.org

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VOICES

EVERY CAREER STEP IS AN OPPORTUNITY

"Every career step is an opportunity. Each one offers chances for building your resume and positioning yourself as a leader and expert. Planning early for your next career move allows you to consider how to leverage your current position, so even if you are not currently looking to make a change, these considerations may prove useful down the line.

"Most important, ensure that you have invested the time necessary to establish credibility and expertise applicable for your next position. For example, if your goal is to support change at the school level, you will have more success if you have spent time as a teacher as well as a principal.

"Your experience and examples will help you build a positive relationship with school-based practitioners and provide you with helpful perspectives as you design and deliver your services."

THERE
ARE MANY
WAYS TO BUILD
A CAREER PATH

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CALL TO ACTION

Stephanie Hirsh

There are many ways to build a career path

One of the privileges of serving as executive director is the opportunity to hear other professionals' stories and questions. Over the years, I have been asked for advice and support from members, particularly those seeking to make career transitions. The questions take many forms: whether to shift to a new position in a district, what opportunities exist to move to a different kind of organization, how to establish oneself as a consultant.

While my advice varies according to the individual situation, there are some key themes I have learned that may be helpful to you.

Every career step is an opportunity. Each one offers chances for building your resume and positioning yourself as a leader and expert. Planning early for your next career move allows you to consider how to leverage your current position, so even if you are not currently looking to make a change, these considerations may prove useful down the line.

Most important, ensure that you have invested the time necessary to establish credibility and expertise applicable for your next position. For example, if your goal is to support change at the school level, you will have more success if you have spent time as a teacher as well as a principal.

Your experience and examples will help you build a positive relationship with school-based practitioners and provide you with helpful perspectives as

Remember the importance of maintaining a network of colleagues with connections. Ask five people how they got their current job, and I suspect networking played a key role in a majority of them.

you design and deliver your services.

If you are not able to invest the years it may take to provide you with experience at the multiple levels at which you hope to serve, consider other ways to establish your credibility. Identify a comparable opportunity that allows you to draw relevant observations as you do your work.

For example, when I hoped to influence policymakers and system leaders, I chose to run for my local school board. Not only did it allow me to serve my local community, it provided countless experiences that increased my credibility with superintendents and elected officials at all levels.

While running for election and serving on a school board may be more than you are willing to undertake, consider other ways you gain perspective and respect from practitioners. Many communities have "principal for a day" opportunities. Shadowing a teacher or student for a week may provide an intense opportunity to learn about the work of an educator.

Interviewing educators and

observing them at work provide opportunities to gain knowledge and develop perspectives. Volunteering in classrooms, joining school or system task forces, and attending open meetings all contribute to your credibility bank.

HOW TO PREPARE

Beyond filling your credibility bank with relevant experiences, there are three concrete actions I consistently recommend educators take to prepare for the next career move.

First, read. Stay current in your field. Read and engage in professional learning in the areas where you intend to support others. Avoid being caught unaware of critical research your potential colleagues or clients are discussing or using. Show that you are ready to bring new information to the table.

Second, publish. Establish your expertise by writing about what you are doing that works in schools. For example, tweet and blog about your classroom or school. Build a following of people who are interested in what you have to share and ultimately trust your advice. In addition, write for magazines and journals. Filling your resume with citations from a variety of publications establishes you as an authority.

Early on, I associated myself with smart people in fields that interested me, and I sought opportunities to serve as their coauthor. Affiliation with more

well-known names can accelerate your recognition as an expert.

Finally, present. Seek opportunities to present on subjects that matter most to you. Participate in as many opportunities as you have time to consider. Being a visible and engaged participant in relevant conversations about your areas of interest will increase the likelihood that people will take a look at what you have to offer and be generous in their response to you.

It will also give you the opportunity to observe leaders, facilitators, and presenters in various situations to inform how you'll present yourself as an up-and-coming leader or expert.

At one point, my resume was more than 20 pages, and the presentation section took up half of it. I never turned down an opportunity to share with my colleagues. I did after-school presentations at my school and later was invited to share at other campuses. I cited all of those experiences until state, regional, and national opportunities came my way and replaced those earlier lines on my resume.

ACCELERATE YOUR REACH

Today, you can accelerate your reach to educators at all levels through the internet. Through these early experiences, you can gather more information about the future career moves that interest you most.

Remember the importance of maintaining a network of colleagues with connections. Ask five people how they got their current job, and I suspect networking played a key role in a majority of them. Start early in building your professional circle of trusted colleagues with whom you



share your goals, seek feedback, and feel comfortable in asking for help. They will be your biggest cheerleaders and, when needed, your most valued critics.

No matter what career stage you're in, remember your responsibility to support others on their professional journeys. I take this advice to heart and look forward to continuing to serve as a mentor during retirement, as other Learning Forward leaders have done.

As educators, our networks flow in every direction throughout our careers. Our emerging leaders need all the support we can provide to ensure they stay invested in education, build their competence, and extend their impact.

•
Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward. ■



BEING FORWARD

Leigh Wall

Everyone deserves the opportunity to learn and grow

Growth and development are fundamental to teaching and learning. As educators, we will always be called on to lead transitions and nurture progress as we strive to prepare students for future life and workforce successes. Embracing and leading transitions ensures that we are able to provide the very best educational experiences for all students, teachers, and families.

Some educational transitions are by design. For example, cohorts of students move through systems each year in intentional patterns. Others occur because of the need to adjust for societal needs, with economic shifts, globalization, and other trends. Each year, we also have the opportunity to adapt, based on knowledge evolution around the best way to develop our schools, districts, and organizations. As knowledge and the world change, our students need us to embrace transition.

Accordingly, for 50 years, Learning Forward has been responsive to the evolving needs of educators and students. We have updated our mission and approach when new information or insights emerge in education and society. For example, Learning Forward recently revised its organizational mission statement to have a more explicit focus on equity in education.



We have also affirmed our commitment to integrating a strong curriculum focus within professional learning in all areas.

At the same time, we have maintained a steady and consistent presence, advocating for quality professional learning, reinforcing the Standards for Professional Learning, and supporting educators' growth through a wide range of networks, consulting, publications, tools, and convenings. All of these efforts directly align with the goals we hold as professionals as we strive to increase learning expectations for all students across the U.S. and the world.

As I begin my term as president of the board of trustees, I know that Learning Forward will continue to achieve this balance of growth and continuity. Beginning 2019 with anticipation and hope for a most successful year, we must embrace transition and change and lead for progress in each area of teaching and

learning that we impact.

Our members and stakeholders — including each of you — make Learning Forward a strong and vital professional organization. As I scanned the large conference hall filled with educators from across the world during lunch at the Annual Conference in December, I was overwhelmingly inspired

by your passion, power, and potential and excited for unlimited opportunities that lie ahead for us all.

I am looking forward to a new year of learning in my role as trustee and school district superintendent. Everyone, in every role, deserves the opportunity to develop, learn, and grow in a manner that is meaningful and beneficial, not only for ourselves as professionals, but more critically, for the students we serve. Regardless of job titles and responsibilities, we are all committed to learning and growing our knowledge and skills for the benefit of our children.

I invite you to join me in making this year one of challenging questions, productive struggles, and new opportunities, while embracing the changes, transitions, and learning necessary for great progress in 2019.

Leigh Wall is president of Learning Forward. ■



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Olivia Elizondo Zepeda

Reach out as you navigate transitions

Transitions are familiar to Olivia Zepeda. From immigrating to the U.S. from Mexico at age 14, to serving as the first professional development director for her Arizona school district, to serving as an associate superintendent, Zepeda has navigated multiple changes.

Change is an ongoing and often challenging reality for many educators. We invited Zepeda to share her insights about navigating career changes in education, the value of professional learning across transitions, and Learning Forward's role in her life.

Current role: Educational consultant

Previous positions: Associate superintendent, curriculum director, professional development director, teacher

Location: Yuma, Arizona

Roles at Learning Forward: Academy graduate, Learning Forward board of trustees, Learning Forward Foundation board of directors

How she got into education: I thought I was going to be a secretary. I didn't like typing, but my counselors were moving me toward that field. Then, in college, I had a work study job as a reading lab aide. I got to work with students and really enjoyed it, so I became a teacher.

On her transition into teaching:

My first year, I walked into an empty classroom and had to go hunt for textbooks and materials. I had to ask other teachers for their leftovers. I was lucky because I had been an aide, so I knew the teachers. From that experience, I learned a lot about how to support new teachers.

On her first big career transition:

When I stepped out of the classroom in 1998 to serve as professional development director, my district had never had anyone in that role before. I didn't know what a professional development director would do.

Going to an NSDC [now Learning Forward] conference gave me a whole new perspective on what professional development is. And it helped me realize how important it is to connect with others in your role, no matter what it is.

Her secret to thriving during

transitions: In a new position, it is important to learn from other people who have already done the job and been through the kinds of challenges you'll face. It's also important to connect with people who are in your present role and learn from each other.

Her advice about leading transitions

and change in schools: I think the biggest challenge [to making change stick] is follow-through and support. Teachers want to do the work. As leaders, we must provide the necessary

follow-up and support to make sure change is implemented.

It takes so much — new learning for our teachers, supporting them while they practice, allowing them to bend and experience the frustrations that happen with change, monitoring, and looking at data to see if it is making a difference.

When they are going through change, teachers need to feel comfortable going to someone and saying "I don't get it. Can you show me?" That's why professional learning needs to focus on human connections and on networks of support.

Why professional learning has been important during her career

transitions: In every position, it is important that you continue to grow. That takes connections with other people you can learn from.

Why she has remained a Learning Forward member throughout

career transitions: Professional learning is necessary for good teaching and learning. When I became an administrator, I knew from my previous position how important it was for the professional learning director and curriculum director to work side-by-side and have the same vision. Now that I am retired, I continue to be part of the Learning Forward family to give back to the profession and continue my own learning. ■



ASK

Janice Poda

What does 'evidence-based' mean, according to ESSA?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) calls for interventions funded with federal dollars to be evidence-based. What does this mean for professional learning initiatives that use ESSA funds? We asked Learning Forward Senior Consultant Janice Poda to answer some common questions about the use of evidence according to the federal education law.

Q: What role does research evidence play in ESSA?

A: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides the potential for great strides in supporting teachers and leaders and impacting student outcomes. Two overarching goals that members of Congress had as they crafted the law were to:

1. Give states more authority to make decisions about how federal funds are spent, along with flexibility to move funds from one area to another to meet student needs; and
2. Encourage states and districts to use proven or promising interventions.

Evidence-based decisions are mandatory in some aspects of the law and strongly encouraged in others. States may spend Title IIA funds on professional learning, although they may also spend those funds on other initiatives such as class size reductions. Those approaches must meet certain standards of evidence.

WHERE TO FIND STUDIES

The following websites are helpful resources for finding studies to review:

- What Works Clearinghouse: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>
- Best Evidence Encyclopedia: www.bestevidence.org
- Evidence for ESSA: www.evidenceforessa.org

Evidence-based decision-making may also be required for other aspects of ESSA that affect educator support and capacity-building. One example is a competitive grants priority for school leader recruitment and support programs.

Q: Why is evidence-based decision-making important?

A: There are many reasons to applaud the focus on evidence-based decisions:

1. The more we use proven approaches, the more we can **improve student outcomes**.
2. State and local leaders can increase the return on their investments of **limited public funds**.
3. Investing in robust evaluations and transparently sharing results can increase **trust and buy-in**.
4. Leaders are **more likely to sustain a strategy** if they can point to strong evidence of impact.

5. It promotes **continuous improvement**, builds **bodies of evidence**, and develops **learning systems**.
6. Policymakers are more likely to **continue funding** programs that work and produce results.

Q: What does ESSA recognize as evidence?

A: The law acknowledges that evidence comes in multiple forms and that highly rigorous studies are not available for all types of interventions. As a result, it specifies four levels of evidence and encourages states and districts to use the most rigorous type of evidence available.

The top three levels require findings of a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes:

- **Level 1 - Strong evidence:** At least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental (i.e. randomized) study.
- **Level 2 - Moderate evidence:** At least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental (i.e. matched control group) study.
- **Level 3 - Promising evidence:** At least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias.

The fourth level is useful when the research base on a particular type of intervention is not well-developed and



few or no rigorous studies are available. It consists of interventions that are developing and promising but do not yet have evidence qualifying for the top three levels.

- **Level 4 - Evidence-building and under evaluation:**
 - o **Demonstrates rationale** based on high-quality research or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes;
 - o Includes **ongoing efforts**

to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

Q: What steps can educators take to find evidence?

A: More evidence on what works to increase student success is available now than ever before, but education leaders may not have extensive experience accessing that information. Recognizing the time and effort involved in this process, some states

are providing research summaries or hiring organizations to make reviewing and selecting interventions easier for districts (Klein, 2018).

For those conducting your own reviews, the following tips can help you get started.

First, conduct a review of the literature and educational research. Select studies that are not older than 1990. Focus on studies in which the participants match or are similar to the students you serve. For example, evidence about a program that has been effective in elementary schools may not have the same impact on high school teachers and students. More evidence about the impact on high school students would be needed before selecting that program for implementation.

When reviewing studies, keep in mind that student achievement (usually measured on standardized tests) is an important metric of success, but not the only one. Educators can also consider the strategies' alignment with state or national standards, consistency with current statements of experts or professional associations, and other indicators of quality.

Q: How can educators review the evidence?

A: One of the best tools to use to determine where and when to collect and use evidence is the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle. Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles can use and build evidence in multiple ways. Use the questions associated with each phase of the cycle to start using evidence today to help you solve your most vexing problems.

Questions that go with each cycle

PLAN:

- What is our goal?
- What is our challenge?
- What does the strongest available evidence recommend for our context?

DO:

- What can we learn from studies about prior implementations?
- How will we know how we're doing along the way?
- How will we evaluate our impact?

STUDY:

- How will we address issues throughout implementation?
- What do the data tell us?
- What explains our successes and setbacks?

ACT:

- What changes should we make?
- Have our needs changed since we began addressing this?
- What can others learn from our experience?

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: Additional resources for selecting, evaluating, and using evidence can be found online.

- ESSA home page: www.ed.gov/essa
- *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*: bit.ly/2d0r16s
- *Evidence-Building Opportunities Under ESSA: How States Can*

and Should Generate Evidence to Drive Better Outcomes for Students: chiefsforchange.org/policy-paper/6072

- *Evidence-Based Practice and School Improvement: Key Considerations*: bit.ly/2Gsrq9X
- Regional Education Labs (REL): ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs
- RCT-Yes: www.rct-yes.com
- *These States Are Leveraging Title II of ESSA to Modernize and Elevate the Teaching Profession*: ampr.gs/2LNVkdX

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RESEARCH

A GROWING INTEREST IN RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

“**R**esearch has always been important to our field, but we have a new opportunity to elevate its importance, thanks to recent policies and priorities — including the evidence provisions for professional learning initiatives in the Every Student Succeeds Act, which increases demand among state and district policymakers for evidence-based strategies and practices.

“In addition, we are seeing growing interest among philanthropy and practitioners in how to best use and support a range of research strategies, such as complementing extant studies with evidence from action research and improvement science approaches.”

HOW TO APPLY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESEARCH TO YOUR WORK

p. **16**



RESEARCH REVIEW

Elizabeth Foster

How to apply professional learning research to your work

The first research column of 2019, at the beginning of this magazine's 40th year, is a good time to pause and take stock of the state of research on professional learning.

Research has always been important to our field, but we have a new opportunity to elevate its importance, thanks to recent policies and priorities — including the evidence provisions for professional learning initiatives in the Every Student Succeeds Act (see article on p. 12), which increases demand among state and district policymakers for evidence-based strategies and practices.

In addition, we are seeing growing interest among philanthropy and practitioners in how to best use and support a range of research strategies, such as complementing extant studies with evidence from action research and improvement science approaches (see article on p. 48).

Research remains a top priority for Learning Forward, as it is critical to our advocacy efforts, will inform the

Elizabeth Foster (elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org) is associate director of standards, research, and strategy at Learning Forward. In each issue of *The Learning Professional*, Foster explores recent research to help practitioners understand the impact of particular professional learning practices on student outcomes.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have thoughts about this study or have recommendations of other research you'd like to see us cover? Email me at elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org.

upcoming revision to the Standards for Professional Learning, and is a high-interest topic among our members, according to a recent member survey.

Given the range of ways in which Learning Forward members and others engage in and use research, this column will depart from its usual format of zeroing in on one research study to highlight themes and ideas we are seeing and provide an overview of guiding resources.

Understand which research best suits your specific purpose.

While demand is high for the best available evidence, the definition of “the best” depends on the type of questions you seek to answer. Different types of evidence are appropriate for different uses.

For instance, randomized control trials are considered the gold standard for demonstrating which professional learning approaches are the most effective in specific conditions. Because assignment to treatment groups is random and the conditions of the study are highly controlled, researchers can have a high degree of confidence

that any changes are the result of the intervention and not other extraneous factors.

These types of studies have been the most effective way to determine what interventions are worthy of continued investment and replication. The scale and precision of such research provides a strong foundation for decisions about which strategies are likely to produce positive results for teachers and students.

While gold standard studies are invaluable, they require great investments of time and resources and can take years to produce findings.

Therefore, complementing foundational studies with other research findings is critical to understanding what works well under what conditions, given the complexities of professional learning — changing site conditions, strategies working in tight combinations, challenges in causal linkages, and other factors.

Qualitative research, such as case studies based on interviews and focus groups, provides valuable contextualized insights about participants' experiences and can elevate and highlight practitioner voices in ways that other types of research do not.

Improvement science research, which features rapid-cycle testing of small change ideas and sharing of test findings, can add to an overall understanding because of the way the results of the cycles provide ongoing feedback. Part of the philosophy of improvement science is that the



learnings are quickly shared and applied, allowing small investments of time and resources to result in usable information for practitioners.

There is also a lot of discussion in the field about the relationships between traditional research and what we learn from program evaluations. Staying away from the debate for a moment, we believe that quasi-experimental evaluations — which compare change over time with pre-

and post-tests or compare two groups who participated in an initiative — are particularly helpful when randomizing participants is unethical or impossible or when an initiative is new and needs small-scale testing before a resource-intensive trial is conducted.

It is important to be intentional about matching research design and evidence with your intended purpose. For instance, a research study about teacher misconceptions that may

RESOURCES

EXISTING RESEARCH

- All Things PLC: www.allthingsplc.info/articles-research
- Digital Promise: researchmap.digitalpromise.org
- Oxford Bibliographies: learningforward.org/publications/oxford-bibliographies

PARTNERSHIPS

- National Network for Education Research Practice Partnerships: nnerpp.rice.edu

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Learning Forward: learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning
- Standards Assessment Inventory: consulting.learningforward.org/consulting-services/standards-assessment-inventory

THE EVIDENCE BASE

- State Supports for Title II Implementation (webinar): learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars/webinar-archive
- Title II Impact Story Survey: <https://bit.ly/2Fplrj>

be critical to a discussion about developing a PLC protocol will not be as compelling in a discussion about the impact of PLCs overall.

Understand and build on existing research.

Whether you are a producer or consumer of research or some combination of both, an understanding of what exists already in the research is

an essential starting place. Fortunately, there are resources that address research and include the details of a specific strategy or aspect of professional learning (see box on p. 17).

There are also research reports that give us the opportunity to engage with researchers and encourage discussions that lead to a better understanding about professional learning implications. For example, we recently developed a webinar featuring a RAND Corporation review on implementation of social and emotional learning under ESSA, which was supported by The Wallace Foundation. Although the report did not focus solely on professional learning, the webinar focused on and drew out that connection to help participants use the important content it contained.

As another example, Digital Promise has developed a compendium of research studies related to education that also link to videos, literature review summaries, vignettes, and additional supports. The free, web-based resource offers a searchable database of research studies related to education, searchable by key word, author, topic, and number of citations.

This is a great resource if you are looking for research on a particular professional learning strategy. The mapping capability also points you to related studies and topics as suggestions to explore — one way to further broaden knowledge about professional learning.

Foster collaboration among researchers and implementers.

Partnerships among researchers

and those who apply their findings in practice have a unique opportunity to generate relevant, contextualized evidence about education change ideas, including professional learning.

Such partnerships are growing, spearheaded by universities, foundations, and organizations such as the National Network for Education Research Practice Partnerships, which offers information and resources about the design of such partnerships and acts as a broker to match interested parties to create intentional, formalized joint efforts that will inform and influence decisions in education based on research.

Such partnerships also exist among the Learning Forward community, with its varied membership made up of classroom educators, school leaders, regional providers, district and

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Joellen Killian and Cindy Harrison

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state policymakers, and researchers. We encourage you to expand these partnerships and to share your valuable lessons for the field by submitting ideas for our conferences, institutes, and publications.

Let the Standards for Professional Learning be your guide.

Given the wide range of topics, designs, and publications in education research, it is important to keep an eye on what it means for professional learning to be effective — not just interesting or innovative.

The Standards for Professional Learning can play a critical role by acting as a framework for discerning what research is relevant and meaningful. The standards and related tools can also help inform where knowledge is lacking with regard to effective overall systems of professional learning — for instance, assessing whether your school or district understands the best evidence related to the learning designs or learning communities.

The standards are the foundation for all of Learning Forward's work and therefore are the lens through which we view research in the field as well as our own role in the professional learning research community.

We are interested in better understanding relevant research that has emerged in the field since the last standards revision — especially with regard to equity, technology, and social and emotional learning — and considering what might be incorporated in the next iteration of the standards. This could highlight areas where the current standards could be strengthened.

Finally, we are eager to highlight research about evidence of outcomes or impact related to the standards and identify additional research that is needed and might be good future

projects for Learning Forward.

We have data collected over years of standards implementation via our Standards Assessment Inventory that could contribute to new research, and we are eager to better understand and document the impact and influence of standards adoption on policy and decisions across a system.

Help build the evidence base for the professional learning field.

As Janice Poda explains on p. 12, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has put forth both a priority about and detailed requirements for evidence-based practices as related to the choices and continued support of professional learning.

Learning Forward is making a concentrated effort to support educators in their quest to understand the evidence requirements in ESSA while also leveraging this requirement to collect and document more evidence related to effective professional learning.

States are often leading this effort and guiding districts to look to the research in making decisions as to what strategies to undertake or continue. For instance, our recent webinar about using evidence highlighted how Tennessee and Washington are building the capacity of educators to use research in identifying priorities and initiatives.

We can strengthen this foundation by evaluating professional learning in schools, districts, and states, documenting the impact of professional learning on educators and students, and sharing findings and data to the extent possible with policymakers. This strong foundation in turn informs and guides policy and resource decisions, shifting the field toward more evidence-informed choices for professional learning.

Advocacy efforts that depend on an evidence base also help inform and build that evidence base. As individuals

become more educated about the need for research that informs strategy and resource decisions, the focus on data collection and evidence gathering increases.

Learning Forward is advancing this relationship through its wide range of advocacy efforts, including a briefing on Capitol Hill that highlighted key findings from large-scale research about effective professional learning as well as the importance of stories about the impact of professional learning.

Lean on Learning Forward as a resource for professional learning research.

Learning Forward continues to conduct original research about specific programs, interventions, and aspects of professional learning as well as the conditions that impact the effectiveness of professional learning.

Currently the organization is engaged in several long-term studies with research partners that will inform the field about topics such as the impact of collaborative professional learning teams and the effect of coaching on secondary teachers' content knowledge.

We also translate data into knowledge, apply evidence for program improvement and policy development, and share knowledge with our members and the field at large through a range of venues, including the Annual Conference and Summer Institutes, the Learning Forward Academy, network communities, our affiliates, publications, and outreach communications.

Our commitment is to highlight the importance of evidence on program and strategy improvement as well as contribute to and generate new knowledge and support policy and advocacy positions.

We welcome your feedback, including ideas for future studies to highlight, actions or partnerships to explore, and other suggestions. ■

ESSENTIALS

TEACHER WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Teachers at Work: Designing Schools Where Teachers and Students Thrive
100Kin10, October 2018

The national network 100Kin10, which is focused on improving science education, identified the biggest challenges in the STEM landscape and the greatest leverage points for addressing them. Three of these

catalysts are related to teacher work environments:

- Relevant professional growth during the school day;
- Opportunities for teacher collaboration during the school day; and



- School leader responsibility for creating positive work environments. The network will now focus on supporting those catalysts. This report lays the groundwork for diverse, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing efforts to build and support them and improve school work environments.

<https://bit.ly/2Ah2mUE>

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Forecast 5.0:
Navigating the Future of Learning
KnowledgeWorks, November 27, 2018

This report is KnowledgeWorks' fifth comprehensive forecast on the future of learning. KnowledgeWorks identifies five drivers of change that will impact learning over the next decade and imagines what those drivers of change could mean for education. How these forces combine and interact will present a new context for education and a new landscape of choices for transforming teaching and learning.

The report includes key questions for reflection and discussion and deeper provocations related to each of the five drivers. They are food for thought for education leaders and ripe for professional learning discussions.



<https://knowledgeworks.org/resources/forecast-5/>

CHALLENGES FOR RURAL PRINCIPALS

The Big Jobs of Small-Town Principals
The Hechinger Report, December 6, 2018

Author Caroline Preston discusses the challenges facing rural school leaders in this recent article from the education-focused news organization *The Hechinger Report*. "Rural school leaders have some of the most complex, multifaceted jobs in education. They also have some of the highest turnover," she writes, pointing to results from a national survey released in July.

She describes a day in the life of one Colorado principal and what education officials are doing to develop and support rural principals. Professional learning can reduce isolation and help principals delegate responsibilities and operate efficiently, the article suggests.



<https://hechingerreport.org/the-big-jobs-of-small-town-principals/>

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Elevating Community Authority in Collective Impact
Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2019

StrivePartnership is a collaboration among community institutions in the Cincinnati area to coordinate services so children can thrive. Leaders from the partnership and its national sister organization, StriveTogether, frame their work through the lens of collective impact, "a strategy that secures long-term commitments by a group of key actors from different sectors to pursue a common agenda for solving a specific social problem."

In this article, Strive leaders discuss the importance of going beyond community voice to sharing authority with the communities leaders aim to help, "both because it is the just and publicly popular thing to do and because it is strategically superior."

The strategies they recommend for educators and other community leaders include:

- Pursue new learning about the community.
- Resist the deficit narrative and look for assets.
- Broaden capacity and expertise.
- Pursue equity with humility.



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FOCUS

TRANSITIONS AND TURNING POINTS

THE IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGE

Change is the only constant in life, said an ancient Greek philosopher, and it is certainly a constant in schools. Students and adults experience a range of planned and unexpected transitions throughout their school careers.

In the pages that follow, authors explore the professional learning implications of leadership transitions, teacher turnover, curriculum and policy changes, and students' life and educational transitions. They highlight opportunities to cope with challenges and seize opportunities. Change in schools may be constant, but it doesn't have to be a barrier to success.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO TO NURTURE CHANGE

Q&A with MONICA HIGGINS



BY SUZANNE BOUFFARD

Monica Higgins is the Kathleen McCartney Professor of Education Leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), where her research and teaching focus on leadership development and organizational change.

Drawing on a background that combines organizational behavior, business, and education, she works with senior education leaders engaged in large-scale change. She runs HGSE's Scaling for Impact initiative and previously co-led the Public Education Leadership Project.

She served as an appointee for U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan from 2009 to 2016, has taught in

leadership programs for The Broad Foundation and New Leaders for New Schools, and was a professor at Harvard Business School for 11 years.

Q: Learning is a process of change, whether we're talking about students developing knowledge, administrators restructuring a district, or curriculum developers improving materials. According to your research on organizational change, what are some of the most effective drivers of change in schools?

A: Organizational culture is often looked at as one of many

levers of change, but I think it is underappreciated. My work suggests it is an outsized lever. I think one reason [it is overlooked] is that it feels amorphous and hard to get your hands around. It's easy for central office to say, "Oh, we need to become a culture in which other people's ideas are valued." But how do you actually do that?

I try to demystify culture. It is something you can actually shape and mold. My work shows the connections among three aspects of building culture: task design, composition, and the systems and structures to develop people.

The way you design a task is powerful. Consider, for example,

something as simple as where people sit. Long-standing social psychology research shows that where you locate people affects the extent to which they talk and share ideas. I recently worked with a large urban district that is restructuring its central office from a design perspective so that it will be easier for people to collaborate.

Another lever is group composition. In education, we often talk about getting the right people on the bus. But from a developmental lens, it's not just about *getting* the right people but *developing* people. So the third lever is the systems and structures to develop people. Professional learning can really help shape the culture of a school system.

Q: Educators have been talking a lot about school culture as it is experienced by and related to students. Do you find a link between adult and student culture?

A: Isn't it interesting that we focus on the student piece of culture more than the adult piece? In my research, I have compared educators' reports of the culture and climate of their schools with students' reports in the same schools. I find that if you make the environment psychologically safe for teachers to speak up, ask questions, etc. — guess what? — the same happens for students.

In education, we focus, rightly, on

the instructional core. But we don't spend enough time thinking about the pieces that surround and support the core. One of those pieces is a work environment that allows teachers to learn, grow, and improve without fear.

Q: Frequent turnover among leaders and teachers is a fact of life in school systems. How do you get traction for change in an environment that is constantly shifting?

A: When you assume leadership in a new system or a new role, one thing that's obvious but people don't think enough about is how people in the system are feeling.

I remember one superintendent who described coming into a "wounded" community. Those feelings can arise for many reasons — for example, maybe people in the system invested a lot of energy and time in a new initiative and then the superintendent left and the initiative fizzled out.

If people are feeling wounded, they are not ready for change. In fact, in that case, the new leader is not actually starting out at baseline but with a deficit.

I think we underestimate the importance of beginnings. How you enter a community and how you take charge matters. Listening is one important strategy. Another is focusing on assets and avoiding shame and blame. If you come in to fix things,

people in a wounded state can perceive your actions as blaming, even if you don't intend them that way.

To limit the risk of this, take an asset-based approach. Find the jewels that are there and bring them forward. Another strategy I have seen leaders in other sectors use is to depersonalize the problems. Instead of talking about how an organization isn't meeting metrics or standards, they generalize the problem as one faced by the field or the nation or a geographic region.

That makes it much easier for people to listen. Afterwards, you'll often find people saying, "Yes, I have seen that pattern," where they might have felt defensive if the conversation was immediately about them.

There is some interesting research suggesting that it can also be helpful to maintain certain rituals, routines, or traditions across transitions. For a long time, we thought it was important to just start fresh and bring in new blood, especially when there have been problems or, say, a founder has been forced out. But now we are seeing the importance of enabling some of the positive aspects of the organization to continue so that there is a through-line for staff members.

Q: You studied organizational change in business before focusing on education. What can we learn — and not learn — about change from the business world?

“When I shifted my focus to education, one big difference that struck me is that, in schools, you can’t choose your customer as you can in many businesses like manufacturing.”

A: From my background, I have learned that organizations are organizations, whether they are biotech firms or hospitals or symphonies or schools. There is a lot that applies across sectors. But there are some important differences.

When I shifted my focus to education, one big difference that struck me is that, in schools, you can’t choose your customer as you can in many businesses like manufacturing. Schools are more like hospital environments or service industries. You need to pay very close attention to who is walking in your school building and the best ways to serve them.

The second difference is that education leaders often have to exercise authority over others for whom they have little or no formal control. School boards and parents, for example, are key stakeholders who need to be engaged but do not formally report to principals or superintendents.

When you can’t use top-down formal controls, you need to pay attention to informal power. You need to be cognizant about how you bring people into the problem-solving process. But this is not the way schools traditionally work. Education is wildly hierarchical — far more so than businesses tend to be.

Q: How do you recommend school systems cultivate informal power?

A: Districts I work with are trying to figure out how to bring in more teacher voice. One promising thing districts are doing is figuring out a strategic agenda around a specific problem

of practice, then creating functional teams composed of the people closest to the problem, including teachers and department heads.

This requires some relinquishing of control and can feel a little bit inside out, but this kind of teaming is incredibly important. It’s not just involvement for the sake of involvement, but generating a diversity of ideas from the people who know the customer best and really understand the problem. The approach should be about finding the best ideas.

One of the projects I lead, Scaling for Impact, takes this approach to the question, “How do we scale ideas we know work?” We invite people to apply to a program we run with a specific problem of practice and to bring a function-specific team of no more than eight people.

In the mornings, we provide some concepts and frameworks. In the afternoons, teams work on their problems of practice. I’m encouraged to see more of this approach happening at the university and elsewhere.

Q: In your research and teaching, you frequently use case studies as a learning tool. Why are case studies effective and how could they be used for educator professional learning?

A: We know stories are sticky, and we want ideas to stick when we are trying to teach or make change. Cases are even more likely to be sticky than other kinds of stories because they contain a puzzle and an action that needs to be taken. If you can put people in the shoes of a decision-maker, they have to

do thoughtful diagnosis, planning, and decision-making for action.

Cases are helpful for facilitators’ learning as well as for students’. As the person facilitating the case discussion, you have to actively listen and draw connections, rather than speaking *at* people. You have to move out beyond what you want to say to what other people have to offer. So if you are the one leading the learning, you learn, too.

It takes skill to do this facilitation well. You have to know where you are going because you want the story to emerge, but you also want to arrive at some central aha at the end. This kind of teaching and learning is inductive, and most of us were trained to think deductively, so it can be a little uncomfortable and a little exhausting. But it’s also very exciting.

Interestingly, people tell me that this method of case teaching also helps them create the conditions for people to learn leadership skills. As a case teacher, you are not teaching leadership directly, but teaching in a way that models it and creates the conditions for developing it, because you are drawing in diverse perspectives to move the conversation forward in a collective way.

I believe this approach applies to professional learning in education not just about leadership but more generally. Everyone can benefit from finding ways to create the conditions for a productive, positive, psychologically safe environment for adult learning.

•
Suzanne Bouffard (suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org) is editor of *The Learning Professional*. ■

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The Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy recognizes that teachers need a coherent professional learning system to assist them in becoming experts. Educators from Kokomo, Indiana, formed one of nine state teams participating in the academy. The Kokomo team includes, from left: Stacy Rush, Frank DeRosa, Maggie Rowlands, Scott Syverson, Kelly Wright, Shari Switzer, Tenicia Helmberger, and Tom Hughes.

LEARNER-READY TO EXPERT PRACTITIONER

ACADEMY SUPPORTS TEACHERS' TRANSITIONS WHILE ADDRESSING EQUITY

BY LYNN HOLDHEIDE AND LISA LACHLAN-HACHÉ

In fall 2016, more than 50% of teachers in Kokomo, Indiana, were leaving the profession within their first three years. Within the district, low-performing schools in particular struggled to retain teachers.

Kokomo was far from alone in this trend, which is common across the country where high-poverty, high-minority, urban, and rural public schools have among the highest rates of turnover (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stucky, 2014).

The costs of teacher attrition are high for districts. According to a report from the Learning Policy Institute, each teacher who leaves the profession costs her district between \$17,000 and \$22,000. And this does not take

into consideration the impact of the revolving door on students and school improvement efforts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

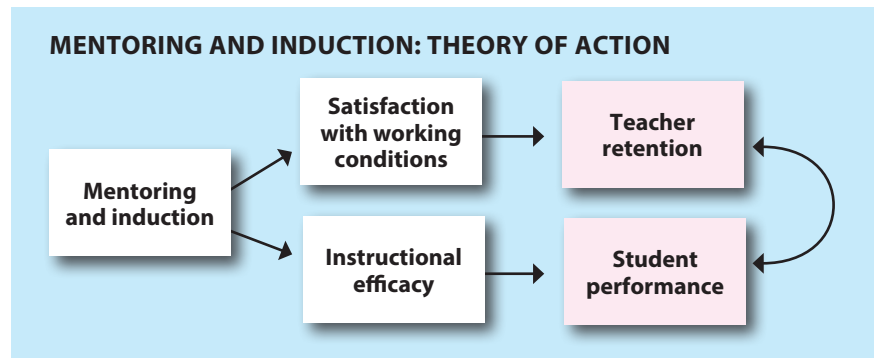
Study after study shows that there is more teacher attrition in Title I schools and those that serve high percentages of children of color and those from low-income families (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2012).

These schools tend to have the fewest resources, toughest working conditions, and largest teacher shortages (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

Empty teaching positions have forced some schools to place less than fully prepared teachers in classrooms and rely on fast-track certification. All of this adds up to the most disadvantaged students having the least access to experienced, effective teachers.

This situation could be addressed by systems of talent management across the career continuum as teachers prepare, transition into the profession, and later assume teacher leadership roles. However, most districts have not yet established strong talent management systems and therefore missed opportunities to cultivate a pipeline of effective educators (Konoske-Graf, Partelow, & Benner, 2016), casting doubt on whether struggling schools — and, most importantly, the students in them — will improve.

But Kokomo has a chance to reverse these trends because the district is participating in an initiative called



Each teacher who leaves the profession costs a district between \$17,000 and \$22,000. This does not include the impact of the revolving door on students and school improvement efforts.

the Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy. This academy supports teams from nine state education agencies and 15 local education agencies in establishing a coherent and aligned talent management system to attract, support, and retain excellent educators in low-performing, high-need schools and districts. It is a joint project of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, West Comprehensive Center, Center on School Turnaround, and Northeast Comprehensive Center.

The Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy recognizes that teachers — no matter how well-prepared — enter the profession as novices and need a coherent

professional learning system to assist them in becoming experts.

Moving new teachers from learner-ready — prepared to model and develop student knowledge and skills on their first day in the classroom — to expert requires a coordinated and aligned system of professional learning for beginning teachers (Benedict, Holdheide, Brownell, & Foley, 2016). The academy has a particular focus on new teacher mentoring and induction because Kokomo and the majority of the other districts identified new teacher attrition as a major problem.

INTENSIVE EARLY SUPPORT

Research suggests that professional learning supports are best when most intensive in the first three years of teaching and that new teachers benefit when there is coherence among the various sources of information regarding what constitutes effective instruction and their roles in schools (Wilson, Rozelle, & Mikeska, 2011; Youngs, Jones, & Low, 2011).

For new teachers, professional learning in the form of comprehensive

mentoring and induction can have important impacts. For example, the New Teacher Center reports that high-quality, intensive induction for new teachers can result in a return on investment of \$1.66 for every dollar invested after five years (Villar & Strong, 2007).

As the academy's mentoring and induction theory of action on p. 27 shows, mentoring and induction can increase teachers' satisfaction with working conditions, which can lead to improved rates of teacher retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Recent studies also indicate that mentoring and induction supports can help teachers improve their instructional practice (increasing the use of engaging practices and formative assessment), thereby increasing student achievement (Schmidt, Young, Cassidy, Wang, & Laguarda, 2017; Stanulis & Floden, 2009; SRI Education, 2018).

Teacher retention and student achievement are closely linked because teachers are more likely to stay in schools where they feel successful. In turn, schools with high rates of teacher retention tend to have more experienced and effective teachers who can positively impact student learning (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders and Center on School Turnaround launched a mentoring and induction cross-state affinity group designed to support the academy states and partner districts that prioritized support to their new teachers. This group consisted of nine states and six districts, out of the total group of 15 districts from nine states.

Using the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders' Mentoring and Induction Toolkit (www.gtlcenter.org/products-resources/mentoring-and-induction-toolkit), a free resource developed for all states and districts, teams worked to develop and strengthen mentoring

and induction efforts with specific consideration for the unique context of turnaround schools.

Kokomo was one of these districts. As part of the Mentoring and Induction Affinity Group, the district participated in a series of six in-person and virtual workshops that supported the development of resources and processes to develop and implement a comprehensive teacher induction program.

Outside the workshops, the team met regularly and used knowledge-building activities and resources from the Mentoring and Induction Toolkit to facilitate a data dive, root cause analysis, induction program inventory, and other activities. The team consisted of members from the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, the Indiana Department of Education, and Kokomo School Corporation leadership teams.

These activities led to:

- The discussion and development of program goals;
- Concrete mentor selection criteria;
- Targeted professional learning materials for new teachers and mentors;
- Mentor and new teacher assessment plans based on teacher and mentor standards; and
- A monitoring plan that includes surveys of mentors, teachers, and administrators to assess the quality and fidelity of the program.

The team piloted the new mentoring program during the 2017-18 school year at four high-needs, high-poverty schools in Kokomo. At the end of the year, all pilot schools retained all their new staff. Before implementing the mentoring program, these same four schools had some of the highest attrition rates of new teachers.

As a result, the new mentoring program expanded to all 13 instructional sites, including one Head Start location, seven elementary schools, three middle schools, the high school, and one alternative school in Kokomo in the 2018-19 school year. To assess its progress, the team is conducting an implementation study and will determine what tweaks should be considered for next year.

Beyond Kokomo, the state team at the Indiana Department of Education developed a comprehensive online Moodle platform course that draws on the Mentoring and Induction Toolkit and aims to support the scale-up of comprehensive mentoring and induction programs across the state.

The department of education is piloting this course with four new districts committed to addressing teacher attrition in high-needs schools, with the goal that each district will be prepared to implement a comprehensive induction program in 2019-20. Once these four districts gain traction, the state team anticipates supporting additional districts through the course for statewide scale-up.

HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

Improvements in teacher retention, like those seen in Indiana, are important benchmarks for gaining traction in teacher retention, but the most important metric of success, especially in low-performing schools, is improved teacher practice.

Research suggests that professional learning is more likely to effect changes in teacher practice when it is sustained over time, targeted to meet specific needs, and provides consistent expectations of and guidance on instructional practices shown to have a positive influence on students' learning (Billingsley, Bettini, & Jones, in press; Benedict, Holdheide, Brownell, & Foley, 2016). Mentoring and induction

efforts should follow these guidelines.

One valuable tool for meeting this expectation is high-leverage practices, which research has shown to be foundational to effective teaching. High-leverage practices cut across instructional content, apply to many age levels and different types of learners, and are confirmed practices that positively affect student outcomes (McCleskey & Brownell, 2015).

Adopting high-leverage practices and explicitly integrating them into mentoring and induction programs may reduce uncertainty and inconsistency in instruction by providing a common language and understanding of evidence-based instructional practices (Billingsley et al., in press).

Using high-leverage practices can also focus the coaching and support and prevent relying on mentors' particular expertise or a scattered approach dependent on random needs identified by teachers (Billingsley et al., in press). High-leverage practice videos are available for free through several federally funded centers at www.highleveragepractices.org/videos.

A new module being added to the Mentoring and Induction toolkit will strengthen integration of high-leverage practices and reinforce the content and skills that teachers need to be effective teachers.

These modules will help teachers support all learners but will pay specific attention to students with disabilities. The new resources will draw on high-leverage practices identified by TeachingWorks; the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center; and the Council for Exceptional Children.

INTEGRATED STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE EQUITY

Mentoring and induction functions at its best when fully integrated into other programs and initiatives at all

levels. No single policy can establish a high-quality educator workforce or eliminate equity gaps. However, a comprehensive set of mentoring and induction strategies at the federal, state, and local levels can lead to better systems that attract, prepare, support, and retain effective teachers in high-need schools.

This work requires moving beyond the current system of loosely coupled levels operating under different guidelines and priorities, often resulting in a piecemeal approach that treats each stage of the career continuum as distinct and often fails to establish a consistent, streamlined set of expectations.

For example, mentoring and induction can, and we would argue should, be integrated with larger equity initiatives because addressing new teachers' needs to improve recruitment and retention, particularly in the lowest-performing schools, can remove barriers to school success for traditionally underserved students.

Blending funding streams is a promising mechanism for integration. The flexibility offered by the Every Student Succeeds Act presents an opportunity to create comprehensive induction programs using funding from both school improvement and professional development.

By braiding funding from Title I and Title II, states and districts can re-envision professional learning for new teachers and their mentors, thereby reversing high teacher turnover trends and increasing the attraction of challenging schools while increasing teacher effectiveness for students in greatest need.

But this work requires the diligent attention of equity advocates to look closely at trends and gaps and focus energy and resources in schools where there are gaps in educator experience and effectiveness. With such attention,

high-quality mentoring and induction programs can better address these gaps, bringing effective instruction to all schools and students.

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JD Fergus (left), restorative justice coach at Phoenix Charter Academy, meets with students in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Students at Phoenix schools have persevered through many challenges and transitions.

GET CONNECTED

TRUST AND IDENTITY RE-ENGAGE STUDENTS IN MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER SCHOOLS

BY LIZ MURRAY

Transitions are a part of life for all students, but particularly for students at Phoenix Charter Academy in Massachusetts. Phoenix students have persevered and shown resilience through challenges in school and in their personal lives that many of us cannot imagine.

Founded on the unwavering belief that all students can succeed at high levels, Phoenix exists to serve high school students who are the most disconnected in their communities.

The schools focus on reaching a growing number on the margins of the traditional public district education system: students who have dropped out of high school, who are parenting children of their own, who are or have been involved with the juvenile justice system, who are under-credited relative to the number of years they have spent enrolled in high school, or who are older and new to the country and cannot gain access to public schooling.

We believe that these young people, like all students, are completely capable of developing the skills necessary to set themselves up for lifetimes of economic prosperity and success.

Our students have experienced a diversity of life transitions, but when they come to Phoenix, we nurture them through a shared transition: developing the identity of successful students.

Students come to Phoenix with a wealth of strengths and assets, from strong work ethics to curious minds to strong interpersonal skills. Yet many of them hold erroneous beliefs, such as “I don’t belong in college” or “I’m not meant for these career pathways,” in large part because society and their previous experiences have bombarded them with negative messages about their potential and abilities.

At the heart of our work is an identity transition through which they come to see themselves as people who can and will succeed in school, career, and life. In this way, Phoenix Charter Academy aims to show students — and the rest of the world — what all young people can do and to defy the limitations of societal assumptions, classism, and racism.

At each of Phoenix’s three open-enrollment alternative public charter schools — in the urban Massachusetts communities of Chelsea, Lawrence, and Springfield — students engage in relevant, rigorous, and engaging education that prepares them for

college or the career pathways of their choice. We pair rigorous academics — including honors, AP, and dual-enrollment college courses — with relentless socioemotional supports.

These supports and opportunities are not always the norm for students who struggle in school, and having access to them is a positive but major shift for our students. It can be a shift for our staff, too.

Professional learning is a backbone of our work, and a key component is helping staff develop the skills and mindsets to support identity transformation as part of the process of academic growth. Staff also engage in regular professional learning around curriculum, performance tasks, and competency-based learning, but without the identity transformation, nothing else matters for students — no internship, college application, test score, or well-designed class assignment.

A FOUNDATION OF TRUST

Our work with both staff and students begins with building trust. When caring for students who have experienced deep and sustained trauma and the deleterious effects of racism and classism, staff must be prepared to work through hard moments with students to

earn their trust.

Teachers must understand that they do not command automatic positional authority or respect because of the degrees after their names or because of their titles. Adults must demonstrate care for every student and be ready to do the relentless and unwavering hard work to earn trust.

Through our hiring process, Phoenix leaders intentionally select staff who see student strengths, have strong empathy and perspective-taking skills, and are willing to help students do the hard work of building new layers of identity. Not only do we talk extensively with candidates about our mission, but we engage them in scenarios to assess how they might respond to the kinds of challenges we encounter in our schools.

The hiring process is only a small part of building a dedicated teacher workforce. Professional learning is essential for scaffolding teachers' skills in navigating acute classroom challenges and fostering their resilience in the face of high levels of student trauma, stress, and conflict.

The school year opens with a two-week staff institute, during which we focus on both curriculum planning and engaging with students. For example, we provide extensive practice in de-escalating situations of conflict, tension, or disrespect. Simply telling teachers what to do during a student outburst or refusal to work doesn't prepare teachers to respond effectively in the moment. Role-playing and practice do.

We use a practice protocol, incorporating difficult scenarios that sometimes occur in our schools and representing the kinds of diversity and identities among our students. Staff role-play a teacher-student scenario, debrief with their peers, and then do the scenario again, incorporating strategies and insights suggested by their peers.

This process not only gives teachers

practice, but also fosters growth mindset, conveying the message that working effectively with student challenges is an ongoing process that takes time and requires growth. This is important for teachers who work with our population because the teaching profession can attract people who did well in school and don't have firsthand experience with struggling academically.

Perspective-taking is essential for our teachers if they are to understand students' needs and communicate to students that they are capable of succeeding.

INSTITUTES AND COMMON PLANNING TIME

We also host staff institutes during the school year. As a charter school network, we have the flexibility to schedule professional learning as needed, including early release for students every Friday so that teachers can work together. Recently, a Competency Institute in Chelsea focused on developing competency-based curriculum and performance tasks.

We are strategic about the curricula that we select and develop to ensure they meet the needs of our students. For example, most materials for English language learners are geared toward elementary-aged children and would therefore be condescending or inappropriate for young adults.

Even with strong curricular materials, teachers need to supplement with great performance tasks. The tasks must be motivating and relevant for this population. If they aren't, students might tune out or simply won't be motivated to attend and engage in learning more consistently.

The tasks also must be rigorous and require original, provocative thinking, and staff identified this as an area in need of improvement. To address this, teachers meet weekly for common planning focused on selecting

and designing performance tasks and aligning them with assessment rubrics, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and our newly developed Phoenix Competencies, which emphasize the social-emotional skills most needed for success in 21st-century college and careers.

For example, we are working on incorporating more extended talk in performance tasks because students need to be able to defend their ideas and English language learner students need to practice vocabulary and fluency. When these tasks are well-designed, they provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their skills. Students gradually come to see themselves as capable of school success.

Through the Competency Institute, teachers are constantly revising and improving their practice and finding creative ways to engage students.

FOCUSED SUPPORT THROUGH COACHING

Just as students need ongoing support, so, too, do staff. Phoenix teachers participate in regular, predictable coaching from senior staff and leaders-in-residence who are participating in a school-based residency training program. We also make sure that the leadership team is open and accessible and that teachers know where they can get support on a Tuesday afternoon when an unexpected challenge occurs in the classroom.

In addition to regular instructional coaching, this year teachers in Chelsea are receiving focused support on being restorative practitioners who can build relationships and navigate conflict. Conflict is a healthy and predictable part of collaboration, team building, and being part of a community with diverse identities and perspectives.

Phoenix leaders and staff work to acknowledge that and develop the mindsets and skills to transform



Phoenix Charter Academy pairs rigorous academics with socioemotional supports. Above, Phoenix Charter Academy Chelsea students with teacher Monica Soares Sousa (left) and restorative justice coach JD Fergus (back row, in hat).

conflicts so that community members feel respected and heard and can work together toward achieving their shared goals. We refer to “transformation” rather than “resolution” because we recognize that productive conversations do not always solve or end conflict per se but should help people get to a new place where they can move forward and continue working together.

We are invested in using restorative practices to address conflict. In contrast to traditional discipline methods, restorative practices focus on conversation and collaborative problem-solving among the parties involved in the conflict.

They provide an opportunity for those harmed to express their perspective and for the parties to work together to find a solution to repair the harm that has been caused. In restorative circles, all parties impacted sit together with a facilitator and follow a structured process of speaking, listening, and determining reparative actions.

This process is valuable for our

community because it provides crucial opportunities for building relationships and trust; demonstrates to students that staff will not give up on them or let them off the hook even when they make choices that interfere with their goals or our community norms; and gives students the chance to take responsibility, make different choices, be heard, and see the positive things they have to contribute.

This is an important part of the identity transformation process because it provides the opportunity and support for students to improve themselves and, through doing so, see themselves in a different light.

Restorative circles are powerful, but not easy. They require skilled facilitation. To build that capacity among teachers and leaders, we created a staff position for a skilled and experienced restorative practices coach who helps adults develop the knowledge and skills to facilitate restorative practices effectively.

Rather than delegating the

facilitator role to one person who is expected to solve and address student issues, we wanted the teaching and leadership staff to develop the capacity to facilitate because this work is fundamental to trust building, identity development, and conflict transformation — all of which are essential to their work with students.

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

While teachers are supporting students’ identity transformation and academic growth, many of them, especially those new to our schools, are engaged in identity development as well. As leaders, we must be clear with teachers that this is appropriate and expected and that their growth is a process.

For example, we must normalize the experience of not excelling immediately, an experience that may be new for many teachers, particularly if they performed well in school themselves. Educators who are new to teaching or

to a specific population of students are learning how to play a new sport.

We need to help them understand that they are not immediately going to be the highest performers when they start. In fact, they are likely to struggle cognitively and emotionally in ways that will challenge their hearts, minds, and physical energy.

This is particularly important for educators from economically and racially privileged backgrounds who may not recognize that their own success in school was aided by systems that validated their cultural experiences and norms, often to the exclusion of others’.

This kind of reflection can help teachers take their students’ perspectives and develop empathy, if leaders are explicit about helping them make that transfer. It can also pave the way for teachers to understand the importance of practice and trying again and again.

and again.

Teachers often need encouragement to seek feedback from peers and help feeling comfortable with that process. We provide that support to teachers, as we do with students. Through this process, they experience the kind of learning we expect them to facilitate with students.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Building staff capacity to provide rigorous academic and socioemotional supports that are culturally responsive and tailored to student needs has real academic benefits. At Phoenix Chelsea in 2017-18, 100% of students who took the 10th-grade state tests for English language arts and math were rated Advanced or Proficient.

But these numbers are far from the only way we measure success and the positive changes our people are

achieving. We see students who have dropped out of traditional schools twice before arriving at Phoenix showing up every morning and doing the work, even when it’s frustrating.

We see the faces of graduates who never thought they’d make it through school walking across an auditorium stage proud and prepared. We hear the stories of alumni now enrolled in college who have come back to share inspiration with current Phoenix students.

Yet we have more work to do. As leaders, teachers, and students, we are always growing, and that is how it should be.

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Liz Murray (lmurray@phoenixcharteracademy.org) is chief academic officer at Phoenix Charter Academy Network. ■

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Lynn Holdheide (lholdheide@air.org) is director and Lisa Lachlan-Haché (llachlan@air.org) is principal researcher at the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research. ■



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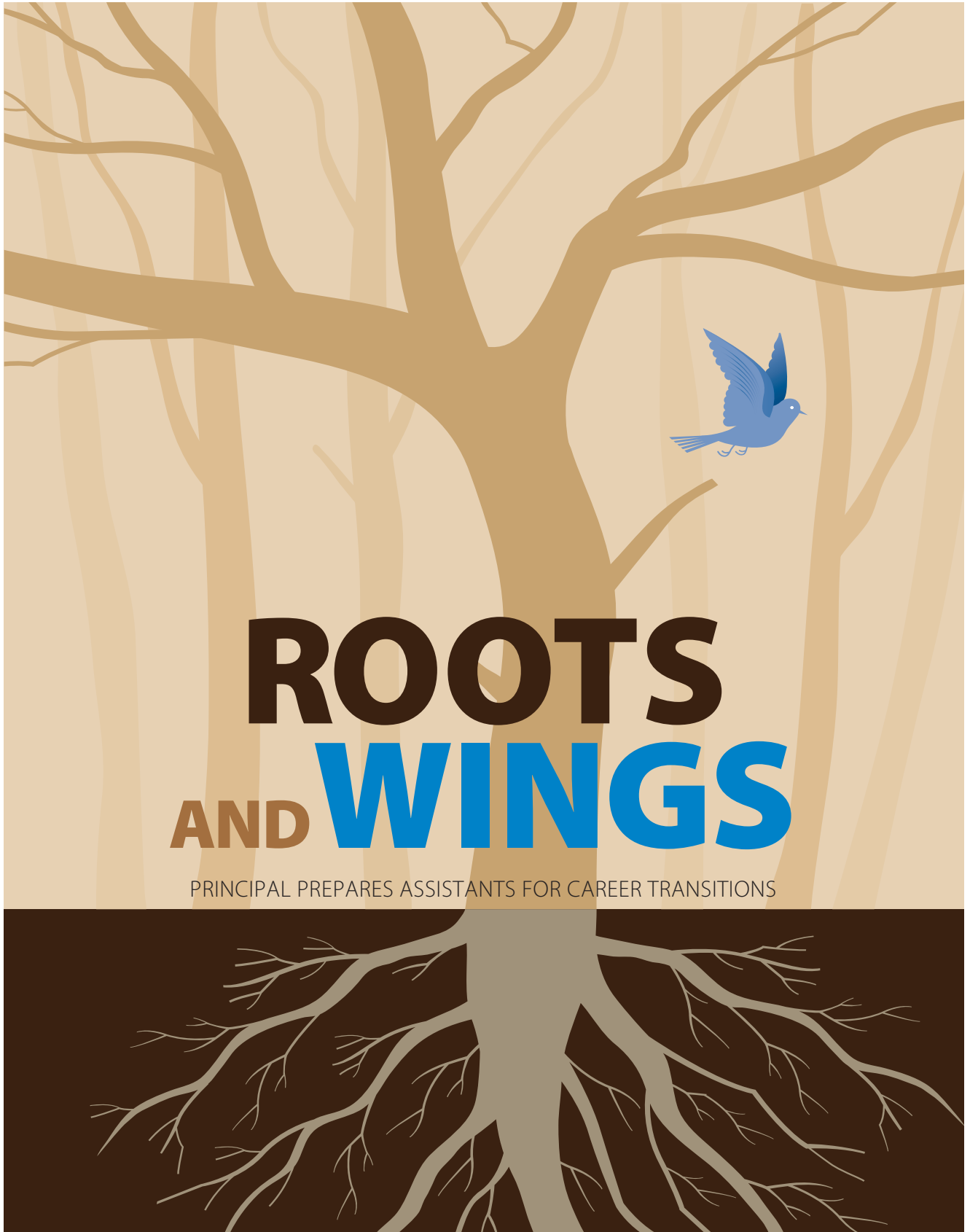
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ROOTS AND WINGS

PRINCIPAL PREPARES ASSISTANTS FOR CAREER TRANSITIONS

BY THOMAS M. VAN SOELEN,
SHANNON N. KERSEY,
CHARLES CHESTER,
MICHAEL LeMOYNE,
AND REBECCA WILLIAMS PERKINS

School leadership turns over frequently. Superintendent succession is well-documented, particularly in urban areas, where average tenure is about 5.5 years (The Broad Center, 2018). In 2015-16, 16% of public school principals left their jobs, with most of them leaving the principalship altogether (Goldring, Taie, & O’Rear, 2018). These patterns are discussed often and with some concern.

Less often discussed, however, are the career trajectories of assistant principals or vice principals. There is little research on how often they change schools or are promoted to full campus leadership. Such changes could be destabilizing — but they could also be positive.

If assistant principals are intentionally and thoughtfully prepared for the principalship, they could help fill the gaps created by principal attrition, and perhaps even stem the turnover tide by being more fully prepared for leadership.

Shannon Kersey, principal of Alpharetta High School in Georgia and one of the authors of this article, believes in the benefits of building assistant principals’ leadership capacity, not just for success in their current jobs but to support their eventual transition to principal.

Three of her former assistant principals are now principals of schools within six miles of each other. One of these three developed one of his assistant principals to assume a principalship. They jokingly refer to this generational advancement as the “Kersey Family Tree.”

Kersey began this work in 2011 as the fifth principal at Alpharetta High School over the previous six years. Given the instability her students and staff had experienced, she made it an immediate goal to create an intentional and long-term plan for leadership in her school.

One of the keys to her approach is personalizing professional learning designs to the needs of the assistant principals. These designs share common threads, however: transparency, trust, and scaffolding.

CO-OBSERVATION BUILDS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

When she became principal of Alpharetta High School in Georgia, Shannon Kersey focused on two interrelated goals: improving teacher quality and preparing assistant principals to become school leaders themselves. She focused on a key link between the two goals, which is also perhaps the most important job of a principal: instructional leadership.

To build the assistant principals’ capacity, she called on work she had done in another district with Thomas Van Soelen, then a central office administrator. Together, they had identified the need for higher-quality observational feedback from leaders to teachers, and they had implemented a new evaluation system (Van Soelen, 2013). Results included improved feedback, stronger teacher practices, and 73% reduction in the achievement gap between black and white students (Van Soelen, Kersey, & Perkins, 2016).

At Alpharetta High School, Kersey invited Van Soelen to lead professional learning sessions, co-observe with every leader involved in teacher observations, and engage in reflective debrief after the observations. He helps them focus and align what they see and hear in classrooms with school goals.

In the spirit of the “family tree” approach to cultivating strong practice, Charles Chester and Rebecca Perkins have adopted the process, which they learned as assistant principals, in the schools they now lead.



Members of the "Kersey Family Tree" include, from left: Charles Chester, Rebecca Williams Perkins, Shannon Kersey, Michael LeMoynes.

MICHAEL LeMOYNE

LEARNING DESIGN: SHADOWING

During Kersey's first two years as principal, Michael LeMoynes worked as an assistant principal, focused on curriculum and instruction. During that time, he identified a pressing need in math. The past several years had seen heavy transition in the statewide math standards and course offerings.

As a result of frequent changes in curricula, some Alpharetta High School students lacked key knowledge and skills in geometry and were therefore not on track with their peers for graduation.

Kersey had several choices in how to lead the situation: assume full responsibility for developing a solution, empower LeMoynes to act unilaterally, or create space for collaboration. Her decision was based on the fact that she saw a prime learning opportunity for LeMoynes, even as she was focused on improving the students' learning.

She decided to use the shadowing learning design, in which a school leader shadows a student, living his or her school life for a day. But she adapted it in an important way to develop LeMoynes's skills: She focused the shadowing on this particular project, rather than on a particular period of time, as is typically the case.

Kersey included LeMoynes in each step of her research and proposal process, consistently asking, "What are we authorized to do? For what do we need permission and from whom?"

Starting with a study of board of education and district policy, Kersey and LeMoynes planned and then pitched to her principal supervisor and the curriculum office a solution they had developed: Create a class for struggling students in which the first part of the school year is spent on the geometry standards, which would better prepare them for the rest of the school year's curriculum: Algebra II.

They assessed essential learning targets from geometry and received permission to re-award the credit and repost a higher grade, therefore meeting both goals: boost students' self-confidence and help them get back on track with their peers.

Each conversation with the central office included both Kersey and LeMoynes, whether in person or on the phone. LeMoynes was able to watch Kersey leverage relationships and navigate roadblocks to make this innovation happen. He believes that he learned things he otherwise would not have known.

"We are not always exposed to the bigger picture as an assistant principal,"

LeMoynes remembers. "Shannon [Kersey] helped me see the importance of strategy and communication."

In 2013, LeMoynes became principal at Hopewell Middle School, a feeder school to Alpharetta High School. It wasn't long before a situation emerged where he needed the strategic thinking he learned from Kersey.

LeMoynes and his leadership team wanted to think more creatively about when and how to award course credit because they believed some students needed more time to master content than the traditional schedule allowed.

"These somewhat arbitrary markers, like the end of the semester, to award grades were really problematic," said LeMoynes. "It is quite hard to convince a middle schooler to relearn material when the grade can't be impacted."

District policy stated schools could only award "incomplete" grades (rather than failing letter grades) for medical or personal issues. But the district has an unusual blend of central office and local school control, which includes a process through which schools can submit a "request for flexibility" to have district requirements waived.

LeMoynes successfully made his case and received the flexibility to issue an Incomplete for individual students who met a set of criteria (e.g. positive

work ethic, engaged in recovery and reassessing), then change the Incomplete once the relearning took place.

As his shadowing experience with Kersey showed, relationships and strategically managing barriers was key to making this innovation happen for his students.

CHARLES CHESTER

LEARNING DESIGN: *COACHING*

Charles Chester came to Alpharetta High School as an assistant principal in 2012 and found a very different environment than in his previous schools, even though they were in the same district.

His previous schools had served mostly minority populations, primarily from poor families. The families at Alpharetta, who are more advantaged, expected frequent and thorough communication from school staff, a different approach for Chester, who wasn't sure how to navigate this terrain.

"I didn't know the political climate [among families], nor did I understand it," Chester says. "I just watched Shannon [Kersey] and learned how to handle things."

As with LeMoyné, Kersey was open and transparent and scaffolded Chester's communication skills. However, with Chester, Kersey chose coaching as the learning design. Similar to many coaching contexts, she used a gradual release of responsibility.

"At the beginning of my time there, Shannon [Kersey] wrote the communications to parents with us [assistant principals] listening in — occasionally giving a word or two of feedback. By the time I left in 2017, assistant principals were writing many of the communications, sending them to her for feedback," Chester recalled.

After Chester moved on to serve as principal in another school, skilled communication with families became even more important. After

the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Florida in February 2018, multiple threats of student violence occurred at Chester's school.

The community needed clear communication from school leaders, not just to reassure them of safety measures but to quash harmful rumors that were spreading on social media about which students were involved. Making matters highly charged, this primarily white community villainized a Hispanic student without evidence that he was involved.

Chester brought forth his learning from Kersey's coaching about communication and knowing the parent community. Now serving a similar demographic to Alpharetta, Chester communicated strategically yet quickly.

"I'm so glad I didn't need to learn that in my first year as a principal," Chester says. He feels he is successfully navigating family communication, proudly pointing out, "Now the district's communications department is hardly revising our letters anymore."

REBECCA WILLIAMS PERKINS

LEARNING DESIGN: *CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP*

Rebecca Williams Perkins is the most reluctant leader Kersey has mentored. Perkins was an accomplished teacher (she was not only Teacher of the Year at Alpharetta High School, but also for the entire county of over 100 schools) and she intended to stay in that role. After a life full of being in charge of everything (e.g. clubs, sororities, organizations), Perkins wanted to focus on her students.

But supervisors saw in Perkins the potential for leadership. A previous principal had asked Perkins two separate times to consider being the English department chair. Each time, Perkins declined.

Kersey, too, saw potential

in Perkins and started having conversations with her about taking the next step as a leader. However, Perkins was clear on her reticence: "I really just want to be a good teacher." Kersey's response was the turning point: "Really good administrators were really good teachers."

Perkins thought: Imagine being a school leader who really understood instruction — that could be amazing. In fact, she and her colleagues were experiencing that with Kersey. One year later, Perkins transitioned to be an assistant principal at Alpharetta High School.

Perkins had strong teaching skills, but she wanted to work more productively with adults. Kersey engaged her within a particular kind of learning community called critical friendships. Created by the School Reform Initiative, critical friendships enable educators to learn the dispositions it takes for adult learning to thrive in schools. Their premise is when adults develop, then students achieve.

"Shannon [Kersey] told us this training was the best professional development she ever attended," Perkins says. "She promised it would change our lives — and it did." Kersey's vision for the school was to become a professional community where educators challenged each other for the betterment of their team and the sake of their students.

"We were having our department chair meetings and doing the 'meeting thing,' but I didn't really know them," Perkins recalls. "During protocol training, the walls broke down, even at the end of the first day."

As Kersey cycled more and more teacher leaders and administrators through the critical friendship experience, she began to use the discussion protocols in leadership team meetings, helping them get their work accomplished while also modeling the

structures and behaviors she expected in departments and collaborative teams.

The model expanded schoolwide, with each teacher as a member of a group beginning in 2017. Each teacher took a turn bringing an inquiry question (about an assessment, assignment, data set, rubric, or professional dilemma) to a mixed department group of their peers and received feedback.

This slow, strategic approach to implementation paid strong dividends: At the end of the year, 78% of the high school staff chose 5 or 6 on a 6-point Likert scale indicating the strong effectiveness of the grouping. The learning design for teachers has extended into the 2018-19 school year.

In 2017, Perkins was appointed principal at the feeder middle school to Alpharetta High School. Although many of these teachers and leaders had also been participants in the same professional development, the principles and practices of critical friendship were not evident in this school culture. “It was the classic professional development gap: went to the training — check. Then no implementation,” Perkins says.

Perkins has resurrected the learned but unpracticed behaviors in her new staff. She uses discussion structures with her leadership team and staff. The content chairpersons receive external coaching from Thomas Van Soelen, who was their facilitator for the critical friendship experience.

“They are still getting used to me really listening. I learned that in the institute,” Perkins says. “I go around the table, assuring equity as everyone speaks. I now give staff the support and space to use these protocols. I know they work, and they will work here, too.”

WORTH THE RISK

In some ways, it was a risk for Kersey to develop leaders, both at the teacher and assistant principal level. As leadership prowess grows in employees,

Alpharetta High School
Alpharetta, Ga.

Enrollment: **2,263**
Staff: **120**
Racial/ethnic mix:
White: **44%**
Asian: **23%**
Black: **20%**
Hispanic: **10%**
Free/reduced lunch: **10%**
Students with disabilities: **9%**
504 plans: **9%**
Gifted: **40%**

there is an increased probability the newly developed educators will move positions, either inside or outside the school.

Indeed, the leaders Kersey mentored have moved on to new roles. This leads to more newness in leadership positions (e.g. department chairs, assistant principals), causing more and more transition.

However, Kersey believes it was worth the risk. Instead of selfishly wanting to keep high-quality leaders at her school, her systematic implementation of learning designs for her assistant principals created a much broader impact as those leaders now are leaders of their own schools.

And her strategies benefited her school’s students. Even with the assistant principal transitions, Alpharetta High School, already a high-performing school when Kersey arrived, has continued to achieve:

- Letter grade A from the Georgia Governor’s Office of Student Achievement;
- AP awards: Merit, STEM, Achievement, Humanities; and
- US News & World Report top 2%.

Additionally, the schools Perkins, Chester, and LeMoyné lead are also on positive learning trajectories. The three schools scored in the top 5% of

all 800 Georgia middle schools on the statewide accountability measure.

We believe it isn’t enough to relegate leadership preparation to our institutions of higher education. Principals can and should be engaged in this worthy work. Among the current and recent leaders of Alpharetta High School, this work isn’t optional — it’s necessary.

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Thomas M. Van Soelen (thomas@vansoelenassociates.com) is president of Van Soelen & Associates in Lawrenceville, Georgia. Shannon N. Kersey (kersey@fultonschools.org) is principal of Alpharetta High School in Alpharetta, Georgia. Charles Chester (chester@fultonschools.org) is principal of Northwestern Middle School in Milton, Georgia. Michael LeMoyné (lemoynem@fultonschools.org) is principal of Hopewell Middle School in Alpharetta, Georgia. Rebecca Williams Perkins (perkins@fultonschools.org) is principal of Webb Bridge Middle School in Alpharetta, Georgia. ■



OPEN UP FOR SCIENCE LEARNING

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
HELPS DISTRICT
NAVIGATE THE TRANSITION
TO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

BY JEANETTE WESTFALL

I will never forget the phone call I received in 2015 from the chief open education advisor for the U.S. Department of Education. For me, it's unnerving when someone from the federal Department of Education calls. But this call was a pleasant surprise — and it turned out to be a key step in my district's transition to open educational resources.

At the time, Liberty (Missouri) Public Schools was updating resources for several

content areas. Content consultant Diana Laufenberg, executive director of Inquiry Schools, had been working with secondary teachers to study options for the best and most current instructional practices in social studies. As teachers considered using online resources instead of or in addition to their textbook, Laufenberg saw the potential for the district to benefit from open educational resources.

She recommended the district to the U.S.

Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology, which was launching an initiative called #GoOpen to transform teaching and learning by encouraging districts to use openly licensed materials.

The department invited Liberty to be recognized as a #GoOpen district by meeting a simple request: Replace at least one course textbook with an open educational resource. In exchange, we would participate in a network of schools that shared processes, policies, and progress in their transition to the use of open educational resources.

Since then, the district has implemented an open educational resource leadership team, embedded itself in a network of schools using open educational resources, and challenged district teachers and leaders to think differently about professional learning around courses and content.

Since we began three years ago, we have learned a lot. But the No. 1 lesson is this: Success is not about the resources themselves. It’s about the professional learning to use them well.

DISTRICT SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

Following the call from the Department of Education, I spoke with district teacher leaders in two content areas, both of whom were in the cycle for resource updates. I offered both teams the option of using open educational resources as the primary resource for instruction in place of purchasing a textbook for their courses and promised them the necessary support to align resources with the district’s essential standards. This would include time to collaborate on the creation and curation of materials.

The secondary science team overwhelmingly selected to transition to open educational resources. The team had been focused on professional learning for project-based learning, which allows teachers to design student

WHY TRANSITION TO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES?

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology lists the following benefits of open educational resources.

Increase equity: All students have access to high-quality learning materials with the most up-to-date and relevant content.

Keep content relevant and high-quality: The terms of use allows educators to maintain the quality and relevance of materials through continuous updates.

Empower teachers: Teachers can adapt and customize learning materials to meet students’ needs.

Save money: Schools can use funding spent on textbooks for other pressing needs, such as investing in the transition to digital learning (Office of Educational Technology, n.d.).

learning around real-world problems or by answering complex questions.

Through their process of developing content knowledge through units of study that evoked critical thinking, creativity, and communication, the teachers realized using their textbooks was not the best fit. They wanted more freedom to curate and create materials that aligned with student goals. Ultimately, teachers of eight courses chose to participate that first year.

It was quickly evident that for this effort to work, teachers needed a clear scope and sequence of essential standards for students’ science learning. Because the district curriculum council had already created these guides based on teacher-identified essential standards, teachers had a clear place to start and a focus for their materials search and creation process. Teacher teams deconstructed or unwrapped the

essential standards into learning targets and began searching for resources to support learning for each identified concept.

One decision in particular proved to be a game changer for successful transition to open educational resources: The district reallocated funds intended for instructional materials and allowed teachers to use those funds to design their own professional learning and collaboration time. We established guidelines for the amount of funds assigned to each content area based on the expenditures toward the print resources.

Additionally, we set budget parameters requiring teams to prioritize funds to pay for curriculum review and vetting, curriculum writing, presenting at conferences about their work, bringing in consulting experts, and purchasing digital resources to pilot and use. Teachers felt empowered to make decisions about their resources based on what each team needed.

As teams provided examples of how student achievement remained steady, decisions about resources were flexible year to year, and options for professional learning improved greatly, the decision to use open educational resources as a primary resource became a strong option for each content area looking at resource adoption.

BUILDING COLLABORATION

Transitioning to open educational resources has improved the strength of the collaboration and professional learning in which our teachers engage. Throughout my leadership career, I have encouraged teachers to collaborate and be forthcoming about the instructional practices in their classrooms in team meetings to bring teacher clarity to the learning outcomes and intentions for students.

According to Corwin, teacher clarity is a “research-based process



Photo by: MARY COOGAN

Biology teachers Ryan Dahm, left, and Juli Hustoft, right, work with 9th-grade biology students Alex Bigler and Kaelyn Simnitt. The students are using model kits to construct carbohydrate monomers and polymers.

for narrowing and focusing activities, cutting away aspects of instruction that don't help learning by identifying the most critical parts of instruction: learning intentions, success criteria, and learning progressions" (Corwin, n.d.).

Some of the district's efforts, like professional learning communities and data teams, created a foundation but not the level of collaboration I had hoped for. To my surprise, using open educational resources has. As teachers worked together curating or creating resources focused on essential standards, I recognized they were having the rich and necessary conversations I had been hoping for through all the other professional learning processes.

For example, 6th-grade math teachers had identified an essential standard to be: "Demonstrate fluency with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of decimals." They created learning targets,

With open educational resources, districts can pivot quickly and make better decisions about a resource if it turns out the chosen one doesn't produce the intended outcome.

one of which stated the learner could "identify errors in problems involving decimals by critiquing and using mathematical reasoning to correctly solve the problem" as one step.

Teachers were able to identify the specific module in the resource — in this case, OpenUp Resources Grade 6 math — to specifically support this learning event.

In addition, if students are not quite on grade level or competent after

their tier one instruction, the flexibility of open educational resources enables teachers to pivot quickly to secondary resources to support the student quickly and easily.

ADDRESSING STUDENT NEEDS

With open educational resources, districts can pivot quickly and make better decisions about a resource if it turns out the chosen one doesn't produce the intended outcome. When a district buys textbooks, it's often a three- to six-year commitment.

This means that teachers are able to respond to student evidence quickly. Teachers are now more likely to look at learning targets and success criteria during curriculum meetings. Teachers rely on their collaborative work around the selection of resources and achievement of the intended learning outcomes instead of expecting the purchased textbook to produce results.

**LARGER NETWORKS,
MORE LEARNING**

Teachers and leaders have begun to benefit from a network that extends beyond their local teams to teachers in other states and nations doing this same work, first through the #GoOpen work with the Department of Education and most recently through the PK-12 OER Learning Network convened by New America and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

Using a Department of Education website, districts can network through #GoOpen Summits — small gatherings for teachers and leaders to share best practices in transition to open educational resources. The professional learning from these conversations is more powerful and influential than anything I have seen because the work not only benefits districts financially but also provides a powerful reason with a process behind it to think about student learning and the resources available to support that learning.

Liberty Public Schools' transition to open educational resources coincided with my own participation in another beneficial network: The Learning Forward Academy. In 2015, I was selected for this 2½-year learning experience, in which participants each conduct a rich and rigorous action research project. My problem of practice focused on the processes and policies of open educational resources use in a district.

Throughout the 2½ years, Academy members used tools and learning moments to focus and evaluate our research. Our learning included how to use a logic model and engage in data collection and analysis processes. These tools always seemed to land in my lap at just the right moments, offering opportunities to reflect and focus on my problem of practice to define and guide my district work in this transition.

Two of the most influential tools



Photo by: MARY COOGAN

Biology teacher Andrew Bilen helps 9th grader Kaytlynn Williams identify the atoms that compose carbohydrates using a model kit.

from the Academy included the theory of change, which allowed me to envision the transition process, and the logic model, through which I was able to create a plan using inputs, outputs, and short- to long-term outcomes for the varying stakeholders. My growth and development translated directly into the district's growth and development in its transition to open educational resources.

CULTURAL SHIFT

With professional learning supports in place, Liberty's experience with open educational resources has been positive. By the end of the 2017-18 school year, teachers of over 50 courses had made the decision to transition. One of the most significant reasons, in my opinion, is due to the focus and control teachers have over the content and the budget.

The district has had its share of setbacks, much like in any other resource adoption cycle, and we attribute our progress to the combination of open educational resources, problem-based learning, design thinking, and Visible

Learning. Together they have created a culture in the district to think differently about traditional approaches to teaching and learning.

Today we have a more learner-centered model of schooling than we have had in the past. This is the first step in empowering students to take ownership of what they learn — by offering them tools and learning that focus on essential concepts instead of a page-by-page approach to content.

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Jeanette Westfall (jeanette.westfall@lps53.org) is executive director for curriculum, instruction & staff development in Liberty (Missouri) Public Schools. ■

Reach. Investigate. Discover.

IDEAS

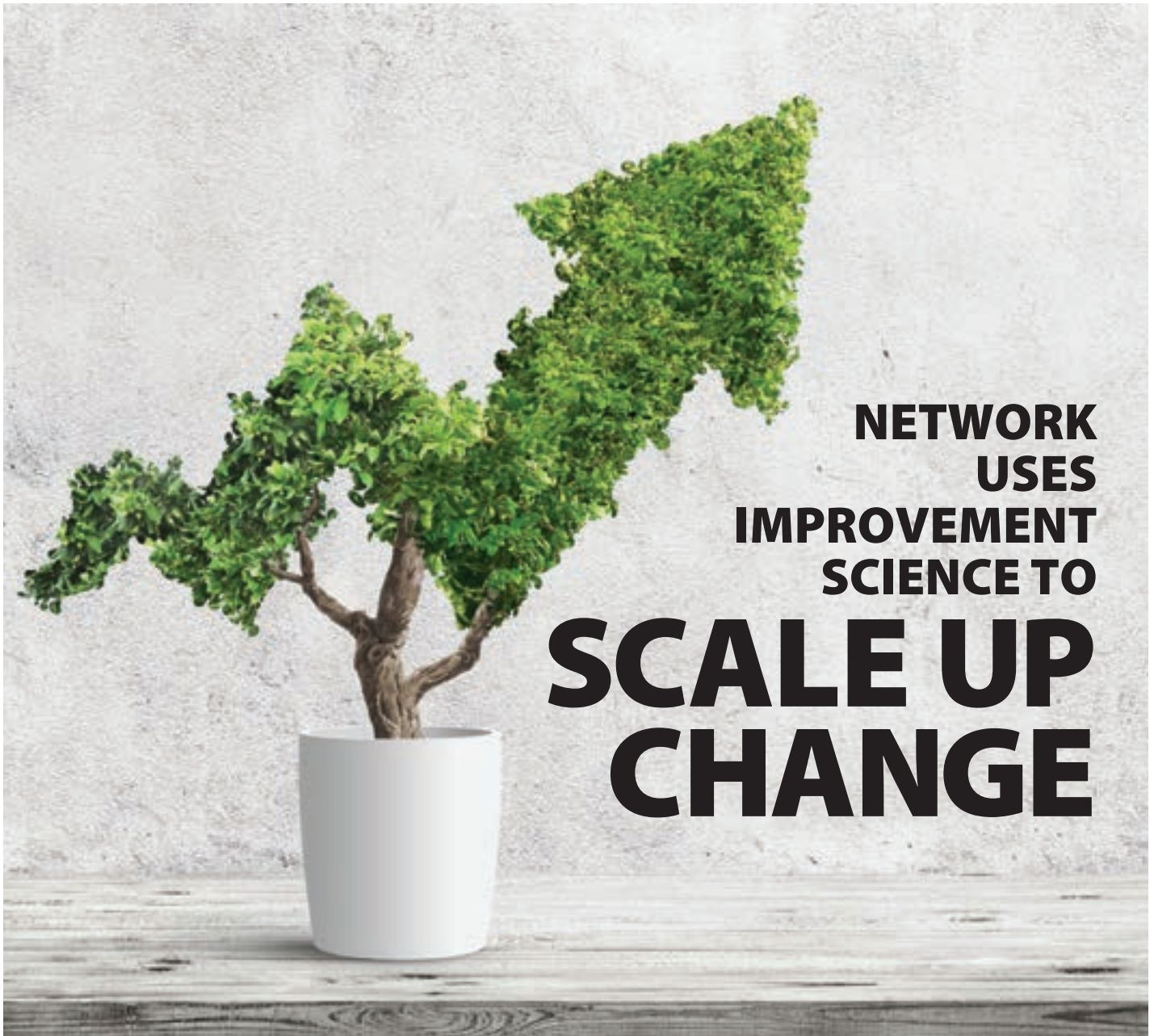


FORCES OF CHANGE

Two forces move people toward new behaviors. First is the **push** of the situation — the moments of struggle that cause someone to want to take action. The push of the current situation is about what is taking place in someone’s life that makes him decide he needs to change and make some progress differently.

“The second force is the **pull** of a new solution to satisfy the job to be done. Without this, people will stay on a treadmill — thinking that they must do something different but not acting. That new solution must be enticing. It must create some magnetism and allure so people can see how it can improve their lives.”

“WHAT
CREATES THE
MOTIVATION TO
CHANGE?”
p. **55**



NETWORK USES IMPROVEMENT SCIENCE TO **SCALE UP CHANGE**

BY MELINDA GEORGE, NICK MORGAN, AND ELIZABETH FOSTER

If you were given the opportunity to design a new way to drive positive change in public education policy and practice *at scale*, what would you do? How would you seek new solutions that bridge the gaps between research and practice?

If you're like many education

stakeholders, you might grapple with some of these challenges:

- Implementing strategies that appear to hold promise but have never been scaled;
- Maintaining the integrity of research-based interventions while addressing the need for

contextual adaptation such as a different timeline or resource challenges; or

- Balancing the benefits of focusing in one area with the pressing need to tackle multiple issues and solutions simultaneously.

We need new sources of innovation to address these classic challenges in improving educational outcomes and break through a history of underwhelming results. *How* we work on these challenges can be just as innovative as *what* we are working on.

Learning Forward's What Matters Now Network is designed to address these challenges using an innovative structure for collaboration and continuous improvement. The network focuses on classroom- and school-level rapid-cycle testing of innovative strategies so that promising practices that lead to positive changes in one classroom or one school can be scaled up to include others and can inform and impact statewide policy at the same time.

WHY IMPROVEMENT SCIENCE?

There is a buzz in education around improvement science. There are also a lot of questions. What does improvement science mean? How does

it work, and is it effective? How can I use improvement science in my practice?

Very simply, improvement science is an alternative to traditional research structures. Instead of waiting until you have all of the evidence in hand, you iteratively test interventions or strategies that are very small in nature, reflect on the progress these changes have made, and then plan for another cycle of testing.

The learning from the cycles is shared very quickly so that any impact of the change can be discussed by the coalitions to determine whether to continue as planned or to change course.

This could mean that a new practice is adopted or adapted or that a strategy that is not working is abandoned. Either way, you can be actively improving your practice and student outcomes while contributing to research. Improvement science allows testing of ideas and addressing implementation gaps in real time.

WHAT MATTERS NOW NETWORK

The What Matters Now Network was launched in 2017 with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It comprises coalitions from three states: Maryland, Ohio, and Rhode Island.

Each state coalition includes stakeholders at local, district, and state levels working together to strengthen professional learning that supports the use of high-quality instructional materials.

The What Matters Now Hub brings coalition leaders together for cross-state learning, with facilitation and expertise in content and improvement science from Learning Forward and the Columbia University Center for Public Research and Leadership.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE OF CHANGE STRATEGY TESTING AND SCALE-UP

WHAT MATTERS NOW NETWORK CHANGE IDEA

Teachers will use a self-reflection tool to assess their instructional materials and professional learning needs after giving a lesson aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. A structured protocol for sharing reflections during a team meeting will lead to revised professional learning planning and changes in instructional practice.

DISTRICT POLICY IMPLICATION

Districts create protocols for the implementation and use of the reflection tool to be shared with all schools in network districts. District science coordinators get feedback about professional learning and instructional materials needs.

STATE POLICY IMPLICATION

States make recommendations for the funding structures to account for job-embedded professional learning designs and high-quality curriculum and instructional materials needs in both urban and rural districts.



The What Matters Now Network is a community of state-based coalitions of educators and policymakers focused on supporting educators in implementing high-quality curriculum and instructional materials. Members of the network include, from left, Jim Short, Dan Ochs, Melinda George, Elizabeth Foster, Claire Morgan, Daniela Fairchild, Melissa Weber-Mayrer, Andrea Clay, Liz Chu, Segun Eubanks, Laura Liccione, and Nick Morgan.

For Learning Forward, improvement science is appealing as a research strategy that can both strengthen and streamline the pathway of information from classroom practice to district and state level policymaking.

We believe that practitioners understand local school and classroom needs and context better than almost anyone, so it is critical that we involve practitioners in policy decision-making. But we also want them to be able to continue their work as educators and improve their practice as they grow through these experiences.

PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT

The improvement science testing cycle, known as Plan-Do-Study-Act, aligns with Learning Forward's theories of continuous and collaborative learning. Teams come together to determine a shared problem of practice and then, together, determine the factors that directly impact the problem.

These factors are called drivers, and they are divided into primary and

Teams come together to determine a shared problem of practice and then, together, determine the factors that directly impact the problem.

secondary levels of impact. The team determines potential change ideas associated with these drivers, then sets up a strategy for testing the change ideas in classrooms and schools.

Examples of change ideas might include testing a new protocol for running a professional learning community meeting or developing an observation tool that teachers could use when visiting one another's classrooms. The key is that the tool is developed collaboratively and educators have time to reflect on what they *think* will change as a result of using the new method or tool, and then have time to come back together again to reflect on what *actually* happened.

The Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle encourages a discussion of measures and

predictions related to the change idea — a critical step in the process. Teams articulate what they think is going to happen as a result of this change and how they will know.

Based on the change data, the team can decide whether to repeat the test as is, tweak the instrument to focus on a different potential outcome, or change strategies and tools altogether.

NETWORK FOCUSES ON A SHARED GOAL

The What Matters Now Network aims to build knowledge at two levels: across and within states.

The network as a whole is focused on the shared goal of accelerating the improvement of job-embedded professional learning focused on selecting and implementing high-quality curricula and instructional materials. (For more information on the importance of this goal for student learning, see the December 2018 issue of *The Learning Professional*.)

Specifically, the network seeks progress on the following goals:

- Identification and enactment of enabling conditions that promote job-embedded professional learning focused on high-quality curricula and instructional materials;
- Design of more coherent and effective systems for this type of professional learning; and
- Increased alignment of a state's professional learning policies, investments, and systems with district- and school-level policies and programs.

STATES TACKLE UNIQUE PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE

At the same time the network works toward its overarching goal, the state teams are tackling their own discrete problems of practice relevant to their local priorities and context.

The states' focus areas include:

- Helping teachers align their lessons, grounded in high-quality instructional materials, to the Next Generation Science Standards.
- Improving early literacy via the use of a flowchart decision-making tool to assess student progress and identify the instructional materials needed to personalize learning.
- Supporting teacher teams to use a protocol for collaboratively examining student work and using results to inform the design of job-embedded coaching on instructional materials.

Each state is tackling these change ideas using small-scale testing in selected schools and districts. Using a structured continuous improvement process, the change approaches will be adapted, adopted, or abandoned over time as the testing proceeds and more is learned from real implementation.

In the next 18 months, each state

RELATED RESOURCES

- December 2018 issue of *The Learning Professional*: learningforward.org/publications/jsd
- Carnegie Foundation blog: www.carnegiefoundation.org/blog/category/thinking-about-improvement
- Center for Public Research and Leadership: cpri.law.columbia.edu
- 2016 National Commission on Teaching and America's Future report, *What Matters Now: A New Compact for Teaching and Learning*: nctaf.org/research/what-matters-now

Scaling up these strategies to more classrooms and schools will only occur when sufficient evidence exists to warrant the confidence for expansion.

will engage in at least six rapid-cycle tests of new strategies aligned to their specific problem of practice and working toward the network aim. In all of the states, the work happening in schools is shared with the districts and the state so that policies can be modified, enacted, or discarded in order to put in place the enabling conditions that the tests identify as needed. Scaling up these strategies to more classrooms and schools will only occur when sufficient evidence exists to warrant the confidence for expansion.

The figure on p. 47 shows an example of a possible strategy and how it could be scaled.

STAY TUNED

In fall 2018, all three states identified a short-term aim for December 2018 and conducted their first two Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles, including testing in their local schools, collecting data, and coming together to assess, reflect, and determine their next test. The state coalitions are also analyzing the data from these first cycles to consider how to address needed changes.

Beginning in 2019, the states will identify a new aim or long-term goal for June 2020 as well as benchmarks that they will measure at various points over 18 months to ensure that the work of the coalition is on track to achieve the June 2020 aim.

Learning Forward will continue to provide content and facilitation guidance and will bring all three states together for in-person and virtual cross-state learning opportunities.

The ultimate goal of the What Matters Now Network is to design a more coherent set of policies and programs to advance job-embedded professional learning that improves educators' ability to select and implement high-quality curricula and instructional materials. This goal can only be realized through teams learning, collaborating, and problem-solving together around this critical issue.

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Melinda George (melinda.george@learningforward.org) is director of policy and partnerships, **Nick Morgan** (nick.morgan@learningforward.org) is a senior consultant, and **Elizabeth Foster** (elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org) is associate director of standards, research, and strategy at Learning Forward. ■



NEW STANDARDS CALL FOR NEW PRACTICES

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL HELPS SCIENCE TEACHERS ADAPT TO NEW CONTENT

BY ROLF K. BLANK
AND BRET MOULDING

Since 2013, a majority of states have been working to implement new standards for K-12 science education that are based on the National Research Council's framework for science education and the Next

Generation Science Standards (Achieve & Lead States, 2013; NORC, 2017; National Research Council, 2012).

The new science standards emphasize deeper understanding of content in relation to practices and a three-dimensional approach to

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL CATEGORIES

Gather: Ask questions, plan and carry out investigations, use models to organize information and data, use mathematical thinking.

Reason: Analyze and use data, construct explanations, use models, reason about relationships, engage in argument from evidence.

Communicate Reasoning: Communicate information, present arguments supported by evidence, use models to communicate reasoning.

Learning Environment: Teacher organized, prepared materials, lesson pacing, students engaged, clear expectations, learning assessed.

Source: Moulding, 2015.

science instruction. They provide an opportunity for educators to improve teaching and learning. How can we ensure that opportunity will be realized?

Professional learning models are a key lever for changing instructional practices to be consistent with the learning expectations established by new standards (e.g. Daehler, Folsom, & Shinohara, 2011; Council of State Science Supervisors, 2017; Student Achievement Partners, 2017). But these models must be designed with intentionality and evaluated for effectiveness.

The Partnership for Effective Science Teaching and Learning (PESTL), a three-year program designed to align with the National Research Council framework, meets these needs (Moulding, 2015). A Mathematics and Science Partnership grant from the U.S. Department of Education supported development of the program along with a test of the

model with Utah schools and teachers (Blank & Moulding, 2017).

One of the key challenges — and opportunities — for developing professional learning for the new context is that the standards call not only for shifts in science content, but also change in the instructional practices to be used in classrooms.

An important goal of professional learning now is increasing teacher understanding of three-dimensional science instruction — core disciplinary ideas, science and engineering practices, and crosscutting concepts (National Research Council, 2012). Each of the

WHERE TO GET THE PROTOCOL

The PESTL Observation Protocol for Science is available by request. Contact Rolf K. Blank (Rolfb444@gmail.com) or Brett Moulding (mouldingb@ogdensd.org).

new science standards is written with the three dimensions.

Core disciplinary ideas focus K-12 science curriculum, instruction, and assessments on the most important aspects of science. They are grouped in four domains: life science, physical science, earth and space science, and engineering, technology and applications of science.

Science and engineering practices describe behaviors that scientists engage in as they investigate and build models and theories about the natural world and the key set of engineering practices that engineers use as they design and build models and systems.

Crosscutting concepts have application across all domains of science. As such, they are a way of linking the different domains of science.

Now the approach to professional learning for new standards must move beyond the previous understanding of two dimensions of content: topics

and cognitive complexity or cognitive demand (Porter, 2002; Resnick, Rothman, Slattery, & Vranek, 2004). With the three-dimensional science standards, schools and districts need new models for professional learning and evaluation of learning outcomes (Council of State Science Supervisors, 2017).

In their educator's guide, *A Vision and Plan for Science Teaching and Learning*, Moulding, Bybee, and Paulson (2015) emphasize the importance of science professional learning that includes modeling classroom instruction and "engaging teachers in science performances as learners of science" (p. 119).

UTAH PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership for Effective Science Teaching and Learning, a science professional learning initiative serving six school districts in Utah, addressed these needs. The initiative supported the districts in advancing standards-based instruction in elementary classrooms and enabled teachers to use their content knowledge to focus on effective instructional strategies.

The program objectives were:

- Increase teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in science specific to disciplinary core ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science and engineering practices;
- Develop teachers' use of effective instructional strategies in science;
- Develop teachers' deep understanding of science standards and the nature of science to increase their effectiveness in science teaching;
- Refine alignment of instructional resources and formative assessment tasks to the science and engineering

practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas;

- Increase teachers' interest in and enjoyment of science learning.

The partnership model includes a five-day summer seminar on science content, after-school instructional alignment sessions, two after-school book studies, and a science content course specific to teacher grade-level (via Saturday sessions).

The components are linked through structured science professional learning communities (PLCs) led by a trained facilitator. The program design was strongly influenced by three National Research Council science publications (2007, 2008, 2012) and early drafts of the Council of State Science Supervisors Science Professional Learning Standards (Council of State Science Supervisors, 2017).

Funding for the initiative came from a state grant under ESEA Title IIB. While the state approved a three-year design for science professional learning for grades 3-6 teachers (Moulding, 2015), funding constraints limited the program to two years.

Facilitators briefed all teachers in the target grades of participating districts on the program, and teachers volunteered to participate. During 2015-17, a total of 99 teachers from six districts engaged in 100 hours of science professional learning per year.

MEASUREMENT TOOL

From the beginning, program leaders built in ongoing evaluation to provide periodic feedback reports to administrators and teachers and track change in teaching practices and teacher knowledge over the course of the program's two years. To do this, a new measurement tool was needed.

An important development in professional learning research over the past decade has been the use of new classroom observation instruments and

methods to compare changes in teacher practice before and after professional learning. But the new instruments are not specific to or differentiated by subject area or content standards. This was a significant limitation for the program, given our focus on changing specific instructional practices in classrooms.

To carry out our research objectives, we needed:

1. The data collection instrument to incorporate key elements of the content standards;
2. Measures of instructional practices that exemplify the content standards incorporated in an observation protocol instrument; and
3. A systematic, consistent classroom observation methodology to collect data on standards-based practices teachers are using.

We developed the PESTL Observation Protocol for Science to provide quantified ratings of instructional practices observed in classrooms. The protocol provides a summary rating of how well teachers are using their science knowledge and instructional skills in shaping classroom instruction to meet specific science learning expectations for their grade. It is both a research tool and a key element of the professional learning because the initial data from classroom observation of teaching practices are shared and discussed with each teacher.

We field-tested and revised the protocol through an initial application and tryout with teachers and schools. The final version includes 18 categories of science classroom practices that directly link to the National Research Council's framework for K-12 science education (National Research Council, 2012) and Utah state standards for science education.

The observation categories are

PESTL OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FOR THREE-DIMENSIONAL TEACHING AND LEARNING		
Science teaching and learning performances: Gathering indicators		
GATHERING	1-5 scale: 1=low 5=high	Notes
Instructions to raters: Award up to 2 score points to rate teacher performance; award up to 3 points for student response.		
Teacher uses phenomenon to engage students in asking questions and/or obtaining information and extends student thinking about science phenomena in ways that lead to: Students asking questions and obtaining data, information, and/or clarifying ideas.		
Teacher uses crosscutting concepts to frame student expectations. Students use crosscutting concepts to ask questions, structure response to others' questions, obtain information, and/or clarify or extend others' questions.		
Teacher creates opportunities for students to connect experiences, previous learning, and core ideas from similar phenomena to the phenomenon being investigated. Teacher uses accurate language to conceptualize core ideas in discussions and actively extends students' thinking of science ideas during discussion. Students accurately obtain information and connect core ideas and conceptual models from similar phenomena to the phenomenon being investigated and discussed.		

grouped for analysis and reporting in four scales that summarize the model for effective standards-focused science instruction: Gather, Reason, Communicate Reasoning, and Learning Environment (see box on p. 51).

In the PESTL model, trained observers with expertise and experience in science education carry out class observations and ratings based on 45-minute teaching and learning science episodes. The observers rate instructional practices for quality of implementation from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

The level of observation rating incorporates what students are doing in class, how teachers interact with students, how activities reflect state standards, and use of three-dimensional instruction. The observation protocol uses couplets of teacher and student behaviors to give a full picture of the learning and teaching occurring in the science classroom. (See table above for an example of one observational

CHANGE IN PESTL SCIENCE PRACTICES OBSERVATION RATINGS, YEAR 1 TO YEAR 2

Table shows average ratings (1 to 5) on 18 observation categories for science practices in the PESTL Observation Protocol for Science.

	Average observation ratings	
	Year 1	Year 2
Ratings of PESTL teachers (n=99)		
Gather	3.4	4.0*
Reason	3.2	3.6*
Communicate Reasoning	2.9	3.8*
Learning Environment	4.4	4.4

* Statistical significance: $p < .01$

category.)

The ratings are summarized for each teacher and average ratings are

computed by category and scale for each district.

SHIFTS IN SCIENCE INSTRUCTION

The program's evaluation study included analysis of change in observed science teaching and learning from inception in year one to end of year two. Observations occurred in winter and spring of year one and year two. Trained science educators observed and rated the 99 teachers from six school districts participating in the professional learning program as well as a control group of teachers from one district not participating in the program.

Analysis of the observation ratings data between 2015-16 (year one) and 2016-17 (year two) shows significant increase in standards-based instruction in science after two years of participation in the professional learning program.

At the beginning of year one, teacher instructional practices ratings on three reporting scales averaged

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3.4 (Gather), 3.1 (Reason), and 3.0 (Communicate Reasoning), on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). The averages at these levels indicated that some teachers were using standards-focused practices but about the same proportion were not. For example, the Gather scale includes the practices “ask questions” and “carry out investigations.” An average rating of 3 for a district’s participating teachers meant these practices were observed in half of the science classes.

By the end of the second year, average classroom observation ratings for teachers who participated in the professional learning were significantly higher (see the table on p. 53) on three of the ratings scales at the $p < .01$ level of statistical significance. Instructional practices on the Gather scale were an average of 4.0, scores on the Reason scale were 3.6, and scores on the Communicate Reasoning scale were 3.8. This represented average improvement in standards-focused science instruction of .5 to 1.3 scale points (on scale of 1 to 5) for teachers in the professional learning program.

Teachers participating in the program rated higher than control group teachers. Program teachers averaged from 2.5 to 3 rating points higher on the Gather, Reason, and Communicate Reasoning ratings categories. Control teachers’ observational ratings averaged 1.3 for Gather, Reason, and Communicate Reasoning categories, i.e. substantially lower than program teachers’ ratings.

However, the observational ratings of the Learning Environment categories for program and control teachers were similar (4.4 vs. 3.9). This finding indicates that the conditions for science teaching and learning, including materials, texts, classroom management, and student behavior, did not differ significantly between the program and control teacher classrooms.

VALUABLE TOOLS FOR NEW SCIENCE STANDARDS

The PESTL model continues to be used in professional learning with Utah teachers and is now part of a new two-year program for teachers in the state of Hawaii. Since this model for professional learning and the classroom observation protocol are based on the National Research Council’s framework for science education, the findings from this research project are relevant for many states and districts implementing new science standards.

The protocol can be used for both formative evaluation of the implementation of science professional learning and summative evaluation of change in participants’ standards-based instructional practices. It can be a valuable tool as professional learning continues to evolve and adapt to learning standards and the needs of educators and students.

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Rolf K. Blank (rolfb444@gmail.com) is a project director with STEM K-12 Research and Brett Moulding (mouldingb@ogdensd.org) is professional learning director with Essential Teaching and Learning. ■



WHAT CREATES THE **MOTIVATION TO CHANGE?**

2 KEY FACTORS INFLUENCE TEACHERS' WILLINGNESS TO MODIFY THEIR PRACTICE

BY THOMAS ARNETT

Laura loved teaching. She loved getting to know her kindergarten students, doing hands-on activities with them, and coming up with creative ideas for lesson plans. But when her district kicked off its blended learning program, she felt lost, confused, and anxious in her own classroom.

As a blended learning teacher, she was supposed to incorporate online learning software into her reading and math lessons at least twice a week. But as someone with self-professed zero

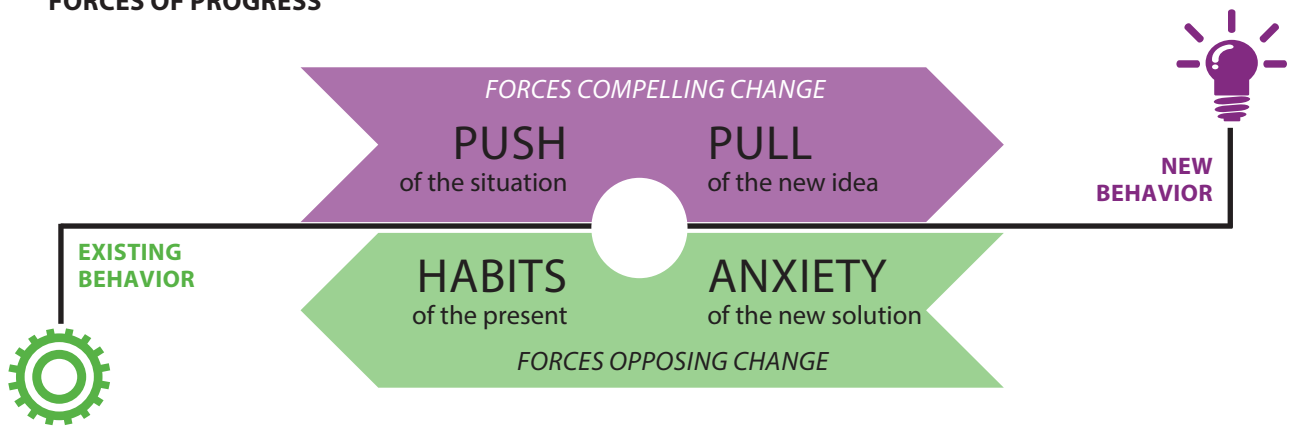
technical savvy, she felt petrified by the notion of using computers with her students.

How could she help them use software she did not understand herself? How would she deal with the inevitable technical difficulties that could quickly derail her classroom management? Most important, how could she have confidence that the time her students spent online was actually worthwhile? Troubled by these questions, she thought to herself, “This is the dumbest waste of time.”

Yet in her determination to not stand out as a Luddite and keep her students from falling behind the rest of the school, she dutifully hauled the laptop cart into her classroom and tried to get her students logged onto the district’s licensed software. Within the first few weeks, many of her worries came true. But at least no one could criticize her for not trying.

Laura is a fictional character based on teachers my colleagues and I have interviewed in our research. But the challenge she faced, and her approach

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to dealing with it, are real for many teachers.

Would Laura’s adoption of blended learning be considered a success? If you looked just at her evaluation rubric, you might think so. She was faithfully checking the box in the middle of the page that reads: Uses technology. And from a nearsighted perspective, she was helping reach the district’s adoption targets.

But good teaching doesn’t come from mere check-box compliance. Teachers who have real impact with their students continually use their expertise and intuition to evaluate, adapt, and improve how they implement new strategies within their classrooms.

New practices rarely make a difference unless teachers engage eagerly and thoughtfully in adopting and refining them. Given Laura’s response to blended learning, none of those approaches or mindsets seemed true for her.

So what can motivate teachers like Laura to adopt new practices with more enthusiasm and an eye for continuous improvement? The answer lies in the conditions that fuel a teacher’s appetite for change.

JOBS TO BE DONE

If we want teachers to adopt new practices enthusiastically, the key

lies in understanding the desires and circumstances that define the jobs they are trying to get done. In this context, a job doesn’t refer to a professional role, like teacher or principal, but to the things teachers are trying to accomplish to make progress in their work and their lives.

This concept comes from Harvard professor Clayton Christensen’s jobs to be done theory, which he and his colleagues developed while studying innovation across many sectors, including health care, real estate, and hospitality (Christensen, Dillon, Hall, & Duncan, 2016). It’s a theory that enables researchers and practitioners to uncover the motivations and circumstances in people’s lives that cause them to adopt new resources, strategies, or ideas.

According to the theory, all people are internally motivated to make changes in their lives that move them toward success or satisfaction within their particular life circumstances. The theory labels these circumstance-based desires as jobs. Just as people hire contractors to help them build houses or lawyers to help them build a case, people search for something they can hire to help them when jobs arise in their lives.

Importantly, jobs are not the same as goals. People often articulate goals based on what they say they want or

value, but then neglect those goals amidst the hustle and bustle of life. For example, consider how often people set goals to lose weight or exercise regularly, only to see those goals fall to the wayside as they manage the more pressing desires and circumstances that show up in day-to-day living. Jobs, in contrast, reflect the desires and circumstances that move people to take action.

Jobs are also not the same as responsibilities. When people meet their responsibilities, their motivation comes not from the responsibilities themselves but from an underlying job that gets fulfilled when they carry out those responsibilities.

An example from outside of education illustrates how jobs underlie motivation. One research team set out to discover what motivates many adults to purchase milkshakes in the morning. By interviewing patrons at one restaurant, the researchers found that many milkshake customers had long morning commutes. These people hired milkshakes not just as a snack, but as something that could relieve them from stress and boredom while one of their hands was busy driving.

In other words, people’s motivation to pick milkshakes over other food options had little to do with either nutrition or flavor preferences. In fact, their actions were likely incongruent

with any stated goals to live a healthy lifestyle. Instead, their desire for relief from boredom within the circumstance of a long commute defined the job that they were hiring for.

Similarly, teachers have jobs underlying their motivation to adopt new practices. For example, one teacher may look for supplementary activities to help him reach a particular student who always seems checked out. Another teacher may adopt a classroom management strategy from his colleague to deal with escalating conflicts with a student who frequently disrupts class.

Whenever teachers decide to change something about how they teach, an underlying job — defined by desires for progress within a particular set of circumstances — motivates that change.

The challenge for school leaders, then, is to figure out how to align new programs and initiatives with teachers' existing jobs so that teachers are motivated to use those programs and initiatives to fulfill their jobs. When they do so, adoption happens naturally.

In contrast, when an administrator-led program fails to address teachers' jobs, the outcomes that follow will range somewhere between mindless compliance and outright rejection.

In Laura's case, she didn't see blended learning as a way to fulfill any of her existing jobs. She often adopted new practices that offered manageable ways to engage and challenge more of her students. But she didn't see blended learning doing that for her. Instead, it triggered a new job in her life: trying not to fall behind on her school's new initiative. This new job diverted her attention from helping her students and instead focused her on managing perceptions.

Fortunately, compliance isn't the only job that motivates teachers to get on board with their schools' programs. Last spring, my colleagues and I interviewed teachers who had recently made a major

Whenever teachers decide to change something about how they teach, an underlying job — defined by desires for progress within a particular set of circumstances — motivates that change.

change to their instructional strategies to discover the jobs motivating them to make those changes (Arnett, Moesta, & Horn, 2018).

Through our interviews, we discovered a number of jobs that intrinsically motivated teachers to change how they teach. These other jobs included: "Help me to lead the way in improving my school," "Help me find manageable ways to engage and challenge more of my students," and "Help me replace a broken instructional model so I can reach each student." When teachers saw schoolwide programs as compelling ways to fulfill these other jobs, they were eager to get on board.

ADDRESS THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Once school leaders identify their teachers' jobs, the next step for encouraging teachers to adopt new programs or practices is to address the circumstances that determine the desirability of a particular solution. According to Christensen's job theory, the circumstances that shape a job can be classified into four categories, called forces of progress because they move people either toward or away from adoption (see figure on p. 56).

Two forces move people toward new behaviors. First is the **push** of the situation — the moments of struggle that cause someone to want to take action. The push of the current situation is about what is taking place in someone's life that makes him decide

he needs to change and make some progress differently.

Part of Laura's lack of interest in blended learning stemmed from the fact that she didn't have any strong pushes motivating her to change how she taught. On a typical day, her students were engaged, she was having fun with her classroom activities, and together they were sharing the joys of kindergarten. In her mind, there was nothing broken that needed fixing.

If her administrators wanted her to be drawn to blended learning, they first needed to help her recognize for herself a need for change. For example, before any talk of blended learning, they might have used reading diagnostics to help her see how some of her students were slipping by with unaddressed challenges in reading.

The second force is the **pull** of a new solution to satisfy the job to be done. Without this, people will stay on a treadmill — thinking that they must do something different, but not acting. That new solution must be enticing. It must create some magnetism and allure so people can see how it can improve their lives.

Laura felt the greatest pull from songs, games, crafts, and other physical activities that channeled her students' energy toward learning. In contrast, blended learning seemed to her to offer little that was relevant for kindergarten. To create pull for blended learning, her administrators needed to help her see that blended learning wasn't just about plugging kids mindlessly into devices.

Instead, blended learning could help her differentiate reading instruction while also helping her manage and reinforce her other classroom learning centers where the real magic of learning happened.

It is also important to address two forces opposing change. The first is the **anxiety** of the new solution. As people consider a new solution, they start

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thinking about all the things they might not be able to accomplish with it. Will it deliver on its promises? Will they be able to use it? Is it too expensive? How will they learn to use something so new? That anxiety — that fear of the unknown — deters people from adopting anything new.

In Laura's case, anxieties about technology were her biggest deterrents to adopting blended learning. Thoughtful administrators should have identified these anxieties before rolling out their schoolwide blended learning program.

To address these anxieties, they might have offered Laura a mix of professional learning experiences, such as upfront training on the blended learning technology, opportunities to observe or even co-teach with another teacher who was familiar and comfortable with blended learning, a community of other teachers who were also learning how to use blended learning, and a blended learning coach who could drop in to Laura's classroom the moment she hit any bumps in the road.

The second force acting against motivation to adopt something new is **habit**. "I'm used to doing it this way" or "I don't love this, but at least I know it works" are classic habits that keep people wedded to the status quo. The thought of switching to a new solution is almost too overwhelming. Sticking with the devil you know, even if imperfect, feels safer.

For Laura, years of teaching experience, tried-and-true classroom procedures, a file cabinet of well-worn lesson plans and activities, and her basic notions about how kindergarten should look and feel all worked against any appeal she might have seen in blended learning.

The only way for her administrators to curb these habits would have been to move her to a new grade level where her habits were no longer relevant. But given how much she

In the end, uptake for most new instructional programs lives or dies based on how well the programs address the forces that act on teachers' motivation to change.

loved kindergarten, and how much her students and families loved her, such a major shift in her teaching assignment wouldn't have made sense.

Rather than trying to address her habits head-on, Laura's administrators needed instead to focus on making sure the pushes and pulls of blended learning gave her enough positive motivation for change to overcome the inertia of her habits.

In the end, uptake for most new instructional programs lives or dies based on how well the programs address the forces that act on teachers' motivation to change. When school leaders create strong pushes and pulls for a program and minimize teachers' habits and anxieties, the program can develop momentum of its own that runs ahead of their deliberate efforts to promote adoption. But when school leaders fail to take these forces into account, no amount of directives or incentives will be sufficient to sustain the program.

Fortunately, even if a program gets off to a rough start, understanding and addressing teachers' jobs sheds light on how to make needed course corrections. In Laura's case, partway through the academic year, her school finally gave her training on the software she was supposed to use and connected her with colleagues who could help her figure out the classroom procedures for making blended learning work.

By the end of the following year, Laura couldn't imagine teaching any other way. She relied on the software to help her keep her advanced students

challenged, show her which students were struggling, and save her from hours of work in the copy room that consumed her prep time in years past. And with blended learning, her small group lessons took on a whole new life.

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

As Laura's story illustrates, jobs to be done is a powerful theory for helping education leaders align their programs and initiatives with teachers' intrinsic motivation. The next time you're designing a new instructional program for your school, start by asking yourself two important questions:

- What are the circumstance-based desires that define the jobs teachers are already trying to get done?
- What forces will move teachers toward or away from choosing my program as a way to fulfill their jobs?

If you can address these questions, you'll be well on your way to launching or implementing an instructional program that not only garners adoption, but also motivates the kind of engaged adoption that drives better student outcomes.

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Thomas Arnett (tarnett@christenseninstitute.org) is senior research fellow at the Clayton Christensen Institute. ■

Discuss. Collaborate. Facilitate.

TOOLS

MENTORS ENCOURAGE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

"New teachers experience a pattern of development as professionals. ... For example, novice teachers experience excitement and anxiety early in their first few months of teaching. These feelings turn into disillusionment near the end of the first marking period, a time during which novice teachers may question their decision to become a teacher and their adequacy and efficacy. ... Typically, as the year unfolds after riding through this difficult time, novice teachers settle into a period of rapid growth and development.

"Mentors want to encourage continuous improvement, challenge with just the right amount of opportunities for growth, and identify and reinforce strengths as they become increasingly more evident."

— *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches, 2nd edition* (Learning Forward, 2017, pp. 93-94)

HOW MENTORS CAN SUPPORT NEW TEACHERS

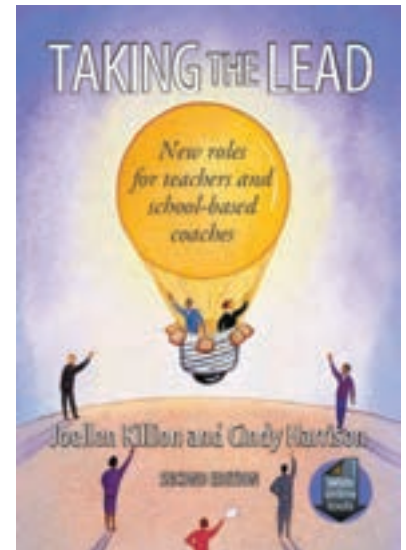
School-based coaches wear many hats, as described in *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches* by Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison. Because of their multifaceted responsibilities, coaches, their supervisors, and the teachers they support benefit from clarifying the roles coaches play, how they support district and school goals, and how to make the relationships as effective as possible.

In keeping with this issue's theme on supporting transitions, in the following pages we share tools from the book related to coaches' roles as mentors.

As mentors, coaches provide the moral, emotional, and psychological support new professionals need so that they gain confidence and efficacy and a sense of belonging within a professional community.

Because student success depends on teaching quality, it is especially important that new teachers develop the capacity to implement the school or district instructional framework and curricular program as quickly as possible so that their students' learning opportunities are not put on hold.

In this set of tools, we offer protocols for coaches for communicating clearly and effectively with the teachers they support, helping educators to clarify goals, monitor progress, and document classroom practice for later discussion and feedback.



Source: Adapted from Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. Available at www.learningforward.org/store.

MENTOR-TEACHER LOG

Purpose	Use this tool to track, document, and follow up on mentor-teacher interactions.	
Recommended time	15-30 minutes plus preparation	
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor-Teacher Log, below and on p. 62 • Supporting materials 	
Steps	1. Teacher completes the Mentor-Teacher Log and shares it with his or her mentor.	Before session
	2. Mentor reviews and comments on the log.	Before session
	3. They discuss the log entry and determine what next steps are needed.	15-30 minutes
	4. Mentor and teacher follow up as requested or needed. They save the log as evidence of their interaction and to track support over time.	As needed

MENTOR-TEACHER LOG	
Teacher:	Grade/subject:
School:	Mentor:
Professional learning goal:	
Performance standard:	Date:
Specific successes related to this goal area. Provide supporting evidence (lesson/unit plans, student work, instructional tools, etc.):	
Relationship between this success and the identified goal:	
Challenge or concern related to this goal area:	
Mentor's comments, questions, wonderings, recommended resources related to the challenge or concern:	
Teacher's next actions:	
Mentor's next actions:	

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

TOOLS

MENTOR-TEACHER LOG, CONTINUED

RESULTS FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF NEXT ACTIONS:

Change in goal area: YES

Change in goal area: NO

Rationale:

Rationale:

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES

Purpose	Use this tool to provide mentors and mentees a variety of observational tools with which to examine classroom practice.	
Recommended time	Variable	
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor-Teacher Log, pp. 61-62 • Video recording of a classroom session • Observation Techniques, pp. 64-66 • Desk Template for Teacher-Student Interaction, p. 66 	
Steps	1. Reviewing Observation Techniques and Desk Template for Teacher-Student Interaction, the coach or teacher leader explains that mentors observe classrooms using a variety of tools to assist mentees in examining their classroom practice.	5-10 minutes
	2. With the coach, the mentors review and practice various observation techniques using a video recording or live classroom.	As needed
	3. The coach and mentors discuss and address questions about specific types and purposes of observation techniques.	During each practice and review session
	4. The coach stresses the importance of matching the observation tool with the mentees' professional learning goals and desired input about their practice.	As needed in each practice and review session

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES, CONTINUED

QUANTITATIVE

1. Categorical frequency count

Using predetermined categories, the observer makes a mark each time a teacher or student behavior occurs. After the observation, marks are tallied to determine how often a teacher, individual student, or the whole class engaged in each behavior. From these counts, the percentage of class time that the teacher or students engaged in each behavior can be calculated. This may be useful for:

- Teacher behaviors such as giving directions, asking questions, praising a student; and
- Student behaviors such as listening to the teacher, working independently, disturbing others.

2. Verbal interaction tallies/verbal flow (see example on p. 66)

The observer records the frequency or the directionality of verbal interactions between the teacher and students or among students. This may be useful for:

- Tracking patterns of teacher questions and student answers; and
- Student-initiated interactions.

3. Classroom movement tracking/proximity analysis

The observer tracks the teacher or students as they move about the classroom during a lesson. The observation instrument can be structured so that the sequence, direction time, and destination of each movement can be recorded. This may be useful for:

- Gaining student attention (e.g. proximity, a gentle touch to regain attention);
- Teacher movement within the classroom;
- Monitoring group work (teacher visits groups to monitor progress); and
- Accessibility of classroom materials.

4. Performance indicator instrument

The observer uses a performance indicator to record the presence or absence of elements within the lesson. For example, the effective cooperative learning lesson usually contains six elements: academic and social objectives, teaching social skills, face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, individual accountability, and group processing. A performance indicator instrument designed for a cooperative lesson would list these elements and the observer would indicate on the instrument whether each element was present. This may be useful for:

- Grouping methods such as cooperative learning, book clubs;
- Instructional methods such as ensuring a balance of methods, scaffolding of instruction, use of technology, mode of presentation; and
- Classroom management methods.

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES, CONTINUED

QUALITATIVE

1. Verbatim recording/scripting

The observer records all verbal interaction during the lesson word for word. Selective verbal recording is a variation in which the observer records the verbal interaction only for those parts of the lesson selected in advance by the teacher and observer. This may be useful for:

- Teacher giving directions
- Asking high-order questions
- Giving feedback to students
- Managing behavior

2. Focused open-ended observation

The teacher and observer agree on certain foci for observation. The observer takes open-ended notes on observations relative to each focus area. This is a more focused variation of the open narrative/free-writing technique. This may be useful for:

- Observation of classroom climate
- Behaviors of a subgroup of students
- Student participation activities

3. Video recording

After the observer videotapes the lesson, the observer and teacher review and analyze the videotape. Analysis can be open-ended or focused on aspects of the lesson. Teacher can also look at videotape on her own and write a reflection about what she noticed about her classroom practice.

4. Anecdotal records					
The observer organizes the note-taking into columns. For example:			OR		The observer organizes the note-taking into categories. For example:
<i>Time</i>	<i>Anecdotal notes</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>I saw</i>	<i>I heard</i>	
8:45	Bell rings	About 1/2 students in their seats; 5 still in hall, 4 milling around.			
This may be useful for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping track of time (the bell rings to signal the start of second period and most students aren't in the seats yet); • Routine activities such as morning routine (e.g. attendance, lunch count, homework collection, notes for the office, questions, unpacking backpacks, office announcements); • The mix of lecture/hands-on activities/practice within a lesson; or • Wait time for student responses. 			This may be useful for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording nonverbal behaviors; • Tracking students' on-task and off-task behaviors; • Examining routines and transition times; or • Managing small groups. 		

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

TOOLS

OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES, CONTINUED

DESK TEMPLATE FOR TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION					
Board			Teacher desk		
	X + Q ++ Q + Steve	X X X —> X Jorge	-- + Richard	---> —> + Anna	
+ Q ++ Fiona	++ Shelley	++ Q Bobby	--- Abeera	--- Anila	++ Q Mara
++ Roberta	++ Jamal	X Q X Jamai	++ Q Netanya		
	X + Q + Q Adeline	X - Jordan	X X X Paavo		
Observer					
Key	- Incorrect response —> Teacher prompt or encourage + Correct response		X Neither incorrect nor correct Q Positive teacher feedback following student response		

TALLY SHEET FOR DESK TEMPLATE FOR TEEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION						
Teacher question category	Tally	Total and %	Student responses category	Tally	Total and %	Notes
Creating						
Evaluating						
Analyzing						
Applying						
Understanding						
Remembering						
More than one level						

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Connect. Belong. Support.

UPDATES

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

2019 is a banner year for Learning Forward as we celebrate two important milestones. Learning Forward, which began as the National Staff Development Council, marks its 50th anniversary. And *The Learning Professional* magazine, which began as the *Journal of Staff Development*, is in its 40th year of publication. In the true spirit of learning and development, we have evolved continuously. We look forward to many more years of learning and growing with you.



Learning Forward's flagship publication as it has evolved over the years.

UPDATES



The Hawaii Math Lab Cohort Team from Maunawili Elementary School in Kailua, Hawaii, joins Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh, left, and Deputy Executive Director Frederick Brown, right, to receive the Shirley Hord Teacher Learning Team Award at Learning Forward's Annual Conference in December. The award honors a school-based team that successfully implements a teacher-led cycle of continuous improvement.

Hawaii elementary wins Learning Team Award

Congratulations to Maunawili Elementary School in Kailua, Hawaii, winner of the 2018 Shirley Hord Teacher Learning Team Award.

Maunawili's Hawaii Math Lab Cohort Team received the award at Learning Forward's Annual Conference in Dallas in December. The annual award, named for Learning Forward Scholar Laureate Shirley Hord and sponsored by Corwin, honors a school-based team that successfully implements a teacher-led cycle of continuous improvement and provides funds to support conference attendance for team members, \$2,500 to support collaborative professional learning, and a gift of Corwin books for the school's library.

Hawaii Lab Cohorts (www.hawaiilabcohort.com) are teacher learning communities that offer an ongoing, job-embedded, differentiated

approach to professional learning for teachers to keep them renewed and accountable to continuous learning and growth in their profession.

Following their initial learning in the lab, the Maunawili math team set a goal to provide targeted professional learning on facilitating mathematics discourse. The team engages in a 10-week cycle of professional learning that supports teachers in conducting action research.

Team members create teaching goals, engage in professional learning to support their goals, apply new instructional strategies, collect evidence of student learning, and provide peer coaching and feedback to each other through observational visits and collective reflection.

Cohort teachers are now expanding this model of deep learning, leading schoolwide professional learning to develop others' collective knowledge and responsibility in their practice.

The Maunawili team was selected from a record number of applicants for the award.

"What sets this team apart is the intentionality of their learning," said Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh. "With their intentional study, goal setting, sharing of practices, observation and feedback, use of data, and collective responsibility for their own learning and their students' learning, this team exemplifies the learning that leads to improved teaching and increased student results."

Teams from across the United States submitted applications for the award. Applications included documentation of each team's work and its impact on teaching and learning, as well as a video showcasing the team engaging in the cycle of continuous improvement.

Located on the island of Oahu, Maunawili Elementary School serves 360 students from preschool to grade 6.



Learning Forward Academy coach Dawn Wilson, left, works with Tiffany Friesen from the Academy Class of 2019.

Apply for Learning Forward Academy

Applications for the Learning Forward Academy, Learning Forward's flagship deep learning experience, are due March 15.

The Academy supports the problem-based learning of teachers, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, principals, regional leaders, superintendents, and others whose jobs involve supporting the learning of other adults and students.

Academy participants spend 2½ years working with expert coaches and practitioners from around the world as they construct knowledge, improve their practice, create better learning conditions for their colleagues, and improve results for their students.

Tuition is \$4,010, which includes 12 learning days (continental breakfast and lunch provided), telephone and web-based discussions, access to experienced coaches, registration for two Annual Conferences, a formal graduation upon completion, and a three-year membership in Learning Forward. Academy members are responsible for their own travel and lodging costs during Academy meetings.

To learn more about the Academy, visit learningforward.org/academy.



A learning team from the Academy Class of 2019 includes: (back row, from left) Adam Wright, Laurie Wade, and Lauren Chisholm; (front row, from left) Shelley Hueber, Amanda Ball, and Shannon Bogle.



EDUCATORS SIGN PROCLAMATION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

More than 500 educators joined Learning Forward in standing up for professional learning by signing a Proclamation for Professional Learning at the Annual Conference in December.

The proclamation, which calls on every policymaker "to support and fund effective, job-embedded professional learning every fiscal year," will be presented to education leaders in the new U.S. Congress to demonstrate how important professional learning is to student success. See the full text of the proclamation at learningforward.org/advocacy/professional-learning-proclamation.

To continue to make your voice heard, sign up for Learning Forward's A-Team, where you'll receive updates on federal funding, news about upcoming webinars, and other critical policy information. To learn more, visit learningforward.org/advocacy.

*A Special Thank You from
Learning Forward and the Learning
Forward Foundation to the Sponsors*

WHO SUPPORTED OUR CELEBRATION OF
STEPHANIE HIRSH AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

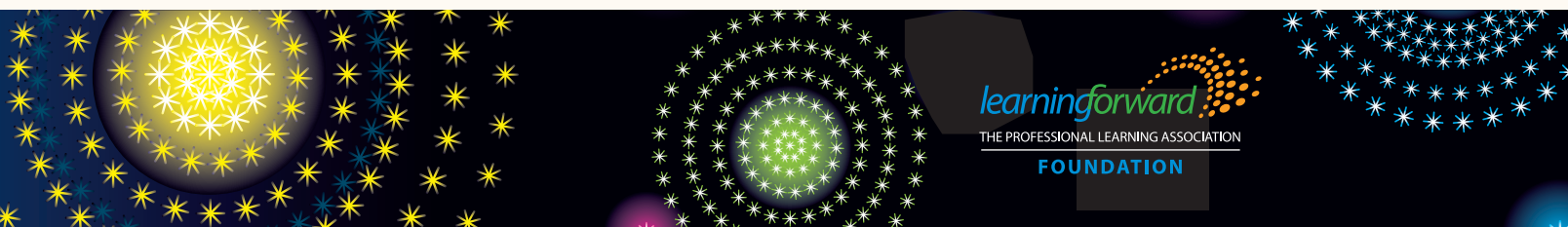
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Ed Tobia, center, from the Learning Forward Foundation presents a check for Brundrett Middle School in Port Aransas, Texas, to (from left) Superintendent Sharon McKinney, Principal James Garrett, 7th grader Ryder Maraquin, and librarian Meghan Zigmond.

Fundraiser supports Texas school damaged by hurricane

The 2018 Learning Forward Annual Conference Host Committee raised funds to replenish the library at Brundrett Middle School in Port Aransas, Texas.

The school's campus was devastated by Hurricane Harvey in August 2017, and its library was destroyed. Because of the generous donations of conference attendees, the Dallas Host Committee contributed \$4,760 to the library restoration project. Our thanks to the conference attendees who helped support this community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Learning Forward's **2019 Annual Conference** will be Dec. 9-11 in St. Louis, Missouri. If you have submitted a proposal to lead a concurrent session, you will be notified of the status of your application by April 16.



Learning Forward's **2019 Summer Institutes** will be July 18-21 in Boston, Massachusetts. The focus will be on curriculum and instructional materials. This Institute will help educators strengthen their capacity to reach all students by building strong connections among curriculum, high-quality instructional materials including open educational resources, and standards-based professional learning.

Board of trustees transitions

Leigh Wall, superintendent of Santa Fe Independent School District in Santa Fe, Texas, is the new president of Learning Forward's board of trustees, succeeding past president Alan Ingram. Steve Cardwell, associate vice president-academic at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, is president-elect. Learning Forward thanks Scott Laurence for his service as he concludes his tenure on the board.



Leigh Wall

ON-DEMAND WEBINAR: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Elizabeth Foster of Learning Forward and Stephanie Jones from the Harvard Graduate School of Education explore social and emotional learning in their webinar, *Social and Emotional Learning: How to Implement What We Know From the Research*.

Foster and Jones discuss what is meant by social and emotional learning, what the research says about effective components of SEL programs and interventions, how SEL is implemented in classrooms and out-of-school time programs, and the implications for professional learning for all educators and leaders.

To view the webinar, visit learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars/webinar-archive.

AT A GLANCE

Millennial teachers want support. Are they getting it?



The millennial workforce

1 in 3

U.S. workers **are millennials.** (Pew Research Center, 2018)



25%

of millennials speak a language other than English at home. They are the **most culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse generation** in U.S. history. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017)

44%

of **U.S. teachers** are under the age of 40. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018)

104%

Increase in **teachers of color** between 1987 and 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017)

YET

82%

of public school teachers **are white.** (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016)

Most new teachers are from the generation known as millennials, born roughly between 1980 and 1996. Millennials are the most educated generation in U.S. history, yet there are fewer of them in the teaching workforce than members of the slightly older Generation X.

Millennials are often stereotyped as enthusiastic but entitled job-hoppers. In reality, research presents a conflicted picture of how often millennials tend to make job transitions. But what is clear is that young teachers care about their career development and want support for professional growth.

Millennials want opportunities for career development

59% vs. 44%

Percentage of **millennials and Gen Xers** who say opportunities to learn and grow are extremely important to them in applying for a job. (Gallup, 2016)

87% vs. 69%

Percentage of **millennials and older workers** who rate "professional or career growth and development opportunities" as important to them in a job. (Gallup, 2016)

YET

Only 6%

of superintendents believe their district understands **millennial teachers' needs.** (Gallup, 2016)

39%

of millennials (across fields) strongly agree that they **learned something new** in the past 30 days that they can use to do their jobs better. (Gallup, 2016)

<50%

of millennials (across fields) strongly agree that they have had opportunities to **learn and grow** in the past year. (Gallup, 2016)

1 in 4

millennials strongly agree that there is someone at work (across fields) who **encourages their development.** (Gallup, 2016)



The case for investing in millennial teachers' development

Under 30 & Over 50

Ages during which **teacher attrition** is most common. (Learning Policy Institute, 2017)

#1

reason for teacher attrition is teacher-reported **lack of administrative support.** (Learning Policy Institute, 2017)

1st priority

among teachers of all ages for improving work conditions is **time during the school day** for peer collaboration and professional learning. (Learning Policy Institute, 2017)

learningforward
THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

For a full list of reference sources, see the online version of this publication at learningforward.org/publications/jsd

THROUGH THE LENS

OF LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...

Learning Communities

... occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

Leadership

... requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Resources

... requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Data

... uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

Learning Designs

... integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Implementation

... applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Outcomes

... aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Transitions and turning points are a natural part of life in schools, and therefore in professional learning. As authors in this issue point out, transitions can create both challenges and opportunities for professional learning. Use these questions for reflection and discussion about the implications of transitions for meeting Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning. Here we consider three standards, but we encourage you to create additional questions for considering all seven standards.

STANDARD	IN ACTION	TO CONSIDER
LEARNING COMMUNITIES	The more one educator's learning is shared and supported by others, the more quickly the culture of continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and high expectations for students and educators grows. Learning communities require regular participation and shared accountability. Transitions among staff and leaders can alter the composition or work of learning communities. Consider these questions about how to make such change positive, rather than counterproductive:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How can you welcome new members into an existing professional learning community while maintaining the momentum of the veteran members?2. Is it ever helpful to restructure or regroup your learning communities? If so, how will you know when to do so?3. Have recent policy changes at the national, state, or local levels impacted the topics explored in your learning communities? Are there ways you can better use policy shifts as a lever for improvement?
LEADERSHIP	Leaders enable and support professional learning, set the tone and expectations, and bear responsibility for effectiveness and results. However, leadership transitions are frequent in educational institutions and organizations and may impact the shape and outcomes of professional learning. Intentional planning for transitions can be helpful.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What leadership transitions do you anticipate in your institution or organization in the next three years?2. How might these transitions impact your professional learning efforts? For example, how can you support continuity of current efforts or seize windows for new opportunities?3. What professional learning supports are needed to make these leadership changes positive and productive?
RESOURCES	Effective professional learning requires human, fiscal, material, technological, and time resources to achieve student learning goals. Actively and accurately tracking resources facilitates better decisions about and increased quality of professional learning. Such tracking can benefit from considering how transitions in policy, leadership, or staffing can impact professional learning resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the staff transitions you are most likely to experience in the next year (e.g. wave of teacher retirements, new superintendent hire)?2. What resources do you need to dedicate to professional learning to help these transitions occur smoothly and effectively?3. What are the implications of making these professional learning resources available (e.g. what other shifts in funding or personnel need to be made to enable them?)?

Learn more about Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning at www.learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning.

Leadership development at all levels



Learning Forward supports organizations in implementing sustained, standards-based professional learning grounded in a cycle of continuous improvement. This requires all stakeholders in the system to take collective responsibility for adult and student learning, and understand their roles and responsibilities in a learning system. We support:



DISTRICT LEADERS to establish the conditions—a shared vision, qualified leadership, aligned resources, measures to learn and improve from, and effective change management—that promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning.



SCHOOL LEADERS to apply the Standards for Professional Learning in their schools and ensure that educators are working in learning communities that engage in ongoing cycles of continuous improvement.



TEACHER LEADERS to form teacher-led learning teams that engage in a cycle of learning that includes analyzing data, setting learning goals, selecting learning designs, implementing new instructional strategies, and assessing and adjusting practice.

We want to transform your system into a true learning system.

For more information on how we can provide onsite, customized support for your school or district, go to <https://consulting.learningforward.org/consulting-services/>, or contact Tom Manning at tom.manning@learningforward.org.