



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Sheldon Harvey

# LET'S MAKE SURE ALL STUDENTS CAN REACH THE FINISH LINE

### Current role:

Principal at Lewis Chapel Middle School in Fayetteville, North Carolina

**Years in current role:** 10

### First job in education:

Middle school math teacher in Durham, North Carolina

## NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE FOR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We love to feature the voices and stories of passionate learning professionals. If you'd like to nominate a Learning Forward member, email [suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org](mailto:suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org) and tell us whom you think we should feature and why.

### How he got interested in a career in education:

I come from a family of educators. All four of my siblings became mathematics teachers. As the youngest child, I wanted to do something different initially. But as I continue in this passion-filled profession, I thoroughly enjoy what I do and would not have it any other way.

### Why he became a principal:

I am a people person and a servant at heart. I am building on the foundation of those who came before me, and I want to help establish a foundation for others to build on. I wanted to have an influence at a different level and affect systemic change.

### Why professional learning is important to his career:

I enjoy being a learner, and I always want to improve. Being able to connect with other professionals and see what has worked in other places is very helpful. I've enjoyed the knowledge base I've gained from professional learning, especially from Learning Forward.

The professional learning resources help me with topics such as giving timely and effective feedback, coaching, and ensuring teachers have appropriate curriculum materials. They help me and my colleagues focus on our district's core values of excellence, innovation, collaboration, equity, integrity, and compassion.

### One of his favorite Learning Forward resources:

The book *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* by Lois Brown Easton is one of my favorites. I have used it as a tool and support many times. For example, when we were looking at restorative justice practices, the chapter on accessing student voices [by Kathleen Cushman] was very helpful.

### Top professional learning priority right now:

Equity. It is important to foster a collaborative environment in which all students are afforded the opportunity to experience high-quality teaching and learning. In an effort to support teachers as they support students, we are offering and seeking professional learning in culturally responsive strategies, coaching sessions with administration, and conducting observations and walk-throughs. Consistency with our practices is essential. In this race of life, not all students have the same starting line, but it is essential that they are equipped to complete the race.

### Biggest challenges as a middle school principal:

One challenge is that no two days are the same. We can plan one thing, but when we wake up and begin the day, it can be different than expected. However, we know that's part of the work we do. Another challenge is balance. Work-life balance is challenging for all educators and leaders. We need to make sure we're giving complete support to teachers as well as providing ourselves time to reflect and self-care.

### Biggest professional reward:

Building and creating strong and healthy relationships with students and staff. It's very gratifying when you see the results of students and teachers collaborating and working together to achieve success. You can tell when students feel they are in a positive learning environment. When they are collaborating, high levels of student discourse occur and learning targets are met. ■