THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

Tackling TURNOVER

WHAT DO EDUCATORS NEED TO STAY?

February 2023, Vol. 44, No. 1

Shifting culture requires learning together

Organizational culture shifts as a result of meaningful collaboration among educators, so where does that leave you when people feel their time is not valued and their needs are not met? Professional learning that it is relevant to the needs of educators, and results in meaningful impact, is the process through which a thriving culture of learning and shared responsibility is built. But how do you bring educators back to the table ready to learn and engage with colleagues?

Because professional learning is only effective when educators actually engage, learn, and implement new behaviors, Learning Forward partners with educational organizations at all levels to improve understanding of the professional learning needs of educators and to design and implement collaborative learning that will bring them back to the table and foster the individual and collective efficacy that improves student learning.

To learn more about how Learning Forward can support your efforts to shift the culture of your school through improved professional learning, contact Sharron Helmke, vice president, professional services, sharron.helmke@learningforward.org.

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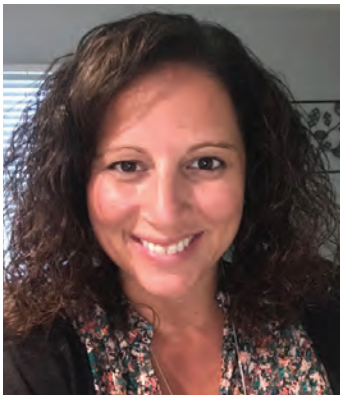
I SAY

Jackie Wynkoop

Instructional coach, Bellefonte Area School District, Pennsylvania; Host, The PL Playbook Podcast



On setting a professional learning resolution for the new year:

"Is there a professional learning practice you've embraced that you'd like to resolve to continue, or an undesirable professional learning practice you'd like to stop? Better yet, what's your professional learning passion? Go after it and set a goal to grow in your knowledge. Just know that you may need to carve your own path. Don't let that stop you, though. Is there a colleague with a similar professional learning interest? Team up and carve a path together. Or seek out a professional learning network on social media. Find your people and connect.

— Excerpted from The PL Playbook Podcast, "Professional Learning Resolutions," December 28, 2022, **bit.ly/3JXFo95**

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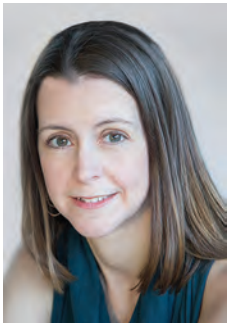

Suzanne Bouffard

EDUCATOR RETENTION IS ABOUT CARING FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR OTHERS

Systems of support can help ensure education is a sustainable profession, one that is consistently satisfying, fulfilling, and challenging in positive ways.

This month, *The Learning Professional* looks at the issue of educator retention from a systemic perspective, asking: What support do educators at all levels need to be satisfied, strong, and successful for the long term?

Along with compensation, respect, and other important factors, we know that professional learning and support are essential. That's because educator retention isn't just about keeping bodies in our schools. It's about caring for the adults who care for students.

I was reminded of this recently when I heard a heartbreaking story about a principal pushed to the limit. On the public radio show "This American Life," a former Arizona Principal of the Year said, "Never in my 29 years as an educator would I think of leaving my school halfway through the year" (Glass, 2023). But that changed after she was subjected to harassment and violent threats for enforcing state-mandated COVID-19 mitigation measures.

For months before resigning, she walked around with horrific voicemail messages, some wishing her dead, echoing in her head. But she kept the specific details of the messages, and her feelings about them, to herself because she wanted to shield the people around her. She said, "People want leaders who are strong but who aren't emotional," and added, "I don't ever want to put my own burdens and my own challenges on my people."

I've thought a lot about those words. Why were those threats her burden? Why does our system make educators feel solely responsible for fixing society's dysfunction? Why have we made them feel that their only recourse is to leave the very places they are needed most?

I've also thought a lot about the alternative. What if this principal had had a professional learning network to lean on? A group of colleagues — perhaps in other schools or other states — with whom to share the burden, get support, and find a path forward, not just for her professional career but for her mental health? And what if that network wasn't something she had to search for but was the norm for everyone in her position?

This principal's story is a reminder of why the vision of every educator having a robust support system is not an academic exercise, nor a pie-in-the-sky goal. It shows why it's essential for everyone to understand what meaningful professional learning and support look like and why one-day workshops aren't sufficient to help educators, and therefore students, be successful. With the challenges we're facing, we can't let old notions of professional learning persist.

I'm not suggesting that professional learning can solve all of the problems in schools and society. Professional support can't undo the social forces that make some people think it's OK to issue death threats to educators. But without it, we have little hope of keeping educators in schools and keeping them whole.

This issue's authors, including three new Voices columnists, illustrate how systems of support can help ensure education is a sustainable and fulfilling profession. Val Brown's column urges us to foster a sense of belonging among new teachers. Kathy Perret's Coach's Notebook shares how "stay interviews" can support retention. And Laura L. Summers kicks off the new Focus on Wellness column.

This issue offers practical strategies, but also hope for our profession. If you find inspiration here, let us know. And if you have questions or concerns, let us know that, too. None of us should face today's challenges alone.

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HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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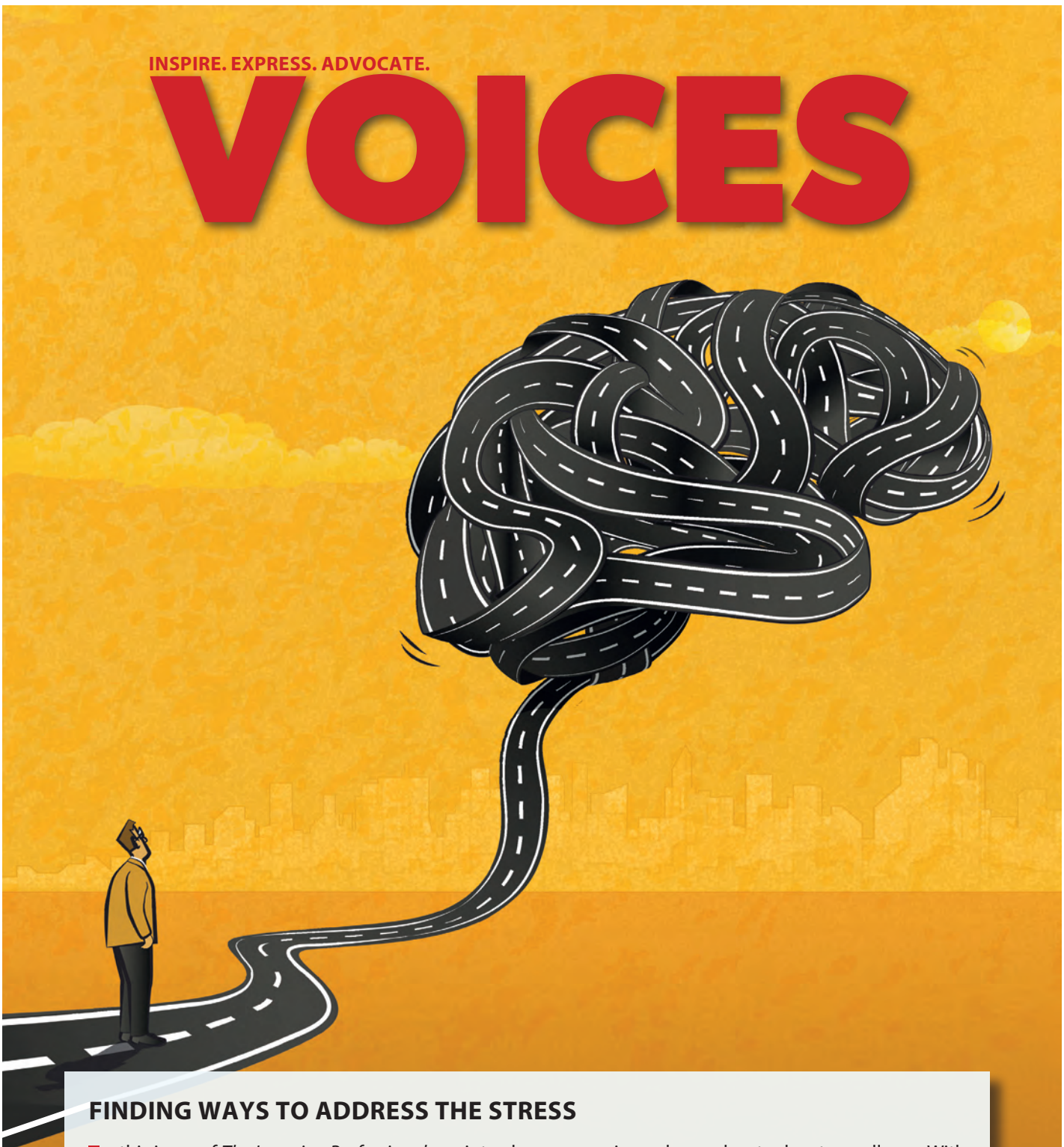
VOICES



FINDING WAYS TO ADDRESS THE STRESS

In this issue of *The Learning Professional*, we introduce a recurring column about educator wellness. With levels of trauma, stress, and burnout on the rise, learning professionals at all levels need meaningful, systemic strategies to support themselves and their colleagues.

Laura L. Summers, a Learning Forward consultant, kicks off the column with an article on p. 14 about how school culture and teacher wellness are intertwined and how to improve them.

CALL TO ACTION

Frederick Brown

PRINCIPALS, ARE YOU LEADING SCHOOLS WHERE TEACHERS WANT TO STAY?

Effective principals use professional learning to strengthen teachers' understanding of and commitment to school goals and initiatives and to build their expertise in ways that entice teachers to want to stay in their school or district.

I was a building principal more than 25 years ago, and I'll be the first to admit that schools have changed a great deal since then. There was no TikTok or Instagram for teachers to compete with, and the thought of students bringing cellphones to school never crossed our minds. But some things haven't changed for educators, including this fact: Teachers who feel appreciated and supported are more likely to stay in the job and the profession.

Principals have always played a key role in that equation. As the authors of the report *How Principals Affect Students and Schools* (Grissom et al., 2021) pointed out, effective principals are skillful at retaining effective teachers, in part because they build strong relationships with teachers and build a productive school climate where the focus is on instruction. I would also argue that effective principals use professional learning to strengthen teachers' understanding of and commitment to school goals and initiatives and to build their expertise in ways that entice teachers to want to stay in their school or district.

Leveraging professional learning in this way requires intentionality, and Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2022) offer significant guidance for leaders. The standards didn't exist in their current form when I was a principal, but as I reflect on my own practice, I feel I was living them in spirit. I believe three standards in particular contributed to high levels of teacher retention in my school.

Professional Expertise: *Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators apply standards and research to their work, develop the expertise essential to their roles, and prioritize coherence and alignment in their learning.*

Although some people view expertise like earning top-tier status on their favorite airline — once it's achieved, nothing more needs to be done — I never thought of it this way. As the standard makes clear, educators need to pay attention to new research and emerging best practices to achieve and maintain expertise. I believe that authentic experience of expertise was vital for the teachers in my school.

Expertise without implementation, however, is like a fancy car that doesn't go anywhere. It's not enough to be an expert if the students don't benefit. In my building, I believe our focus on implementation also contributed to my staff's success.

Implementation: *Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators understand and apply research on change management, engage in feedback processes, and implement and sustain professional learning.*

More than once during my principalship, the district or school administration introduced new curricula, instructional materials, or expected practices. Sometimes it felt like we were in a constant state of change, and that can be frustrating for teachers. However, when managed intentionally and effectively, the change process can create even stronger commitment among the staff. One way to do this is by honoring and addressing teachers' concerns. I also worked with my staff to put our own mark on new strategies and resources in a way that incorporated their

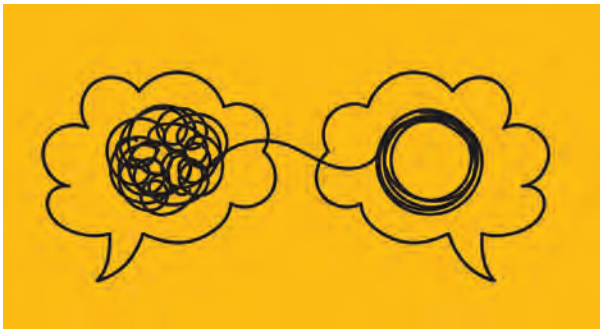
Continued on p. 16

Frederick Brown (frederick.brown@learningforward.org) is president and CEO of Learning Forward.

NETWORKS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

While the format of networks can vary, the goal is to create a collaborative space that results in improvement within systems.

In the world of technology, a network is a set of computers that communicates with each other using common language or protocols, leading to more efficiency, speed, and quality of processes and outputs. In the professional learning world, we refer to networks as a set of organizations communicating and learning around a common problem of practice. As with computers, professional learning networks impact our practice by increasing the efficiency of the improvement process and the quality of learning.



Networks support education colleagues to engage in collaborative inquiry, which promotes the ongoing exchange of knowledge, ideas, and resources for continuous improvement. While the format of networks can vary, the goal is to create a collaborative space that results in improvement within systems. Ultimately, networks create the opportunity for educators to work smarter, not harder.

For two years, Learning Forward has worked with Ohio's State Literacy Network to do just this. The state of Ohio is shifting to a more structured literacy model that reflects the research on the science of reading. As Ohio educators are making dramatic shifts in their approach to literacy, they need networking to learn from one another about implementing and ensuring best practices.

As part of the network, 16 state support teams are responsible for implementing regional services supporting districts that range in size and student and educator demographics. The leaders of these teams participate in high-quality professional learning and, in turn, facilitate professional learning on evidence-based practices that impact student achievement.

With a network of educators working across all regions, and networks among districts within each region, it's important to ensure that all the learning is grounded in best practices and that leaders at each level model those best practices. Ohio's network model serves as a thriving example of how Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning create a foundation for best practices and continuous improvement in building educator capacity.

To illustrate how Ohio is aligning its work with the standards, we can look to the work of Laura Jones, regional literacy specialist and network leader for one of the state support teams. Jones uses the tools and knowledge she is gaining through her own participation in the Ohio State Literacy Network to improve the effectiveness of the regional network she is leading. The regional network is creating high-quality professional learning plans on structured literacy. Here are examples of how Jones is incorporating the standards into that work.

Professional Expertise: Jones is building her expertise in the tools and processes of continuous improvement and applying them with the network she leads. Through the knowledge she has gained, Jones is improving the support she provides to her network and building her educators' knowledge of change management and implementation. For example, she uses the Implementation Science checklist to help her plan learning designs for upcoming convenings. In addition, she has used the KASAB model — which means recognizing that learning includes building knowledge,

Continued on p. 16

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Kathy Perret

WANT TO RETAIN TEACHERS? ASK THEM WHAT THEY NEED

Have you seen the movie *Field of Dreams*? It's about a farmer from my home state of Iowa who builds a baseball field among his cornstalks that attracts the spirits of past baseball legends. Even if you haven't seen the film, you've probably heard the quote, "If you build it, he will come" (Robinson, 1989). These days, we often hear an adapted version of this quote: "Build it, and *they* will come."

Building something and hoping people will come may work in a movie, but, unfortunately, it doesn't miraculously happen in our schools. In my work with instructional coaches and school leaders, I have adopted a different spin on the quote: Build together so they will stay.

The word "stay" is key. We are seeing teachers leave the profession at alarming rates, and declining rates of people entering the profession make it even more important to hold on to the teachers we have.

The word "together" is also key. We all have to work in collaboration to improve teacher retention — leaders, coaches, teachers, and all staff. Building collaborative school culture is an ongoing process. Here's one strategy I recommend, regardless of where you are in your leadership journey, that ties directly to improving retention.

Typically, the goal of an exit interview is to ascertain why the employee is leaving. But why not be more proactive? Why wait until an employee has already decided to leave before figuring out how to improve things?

THE STAY INTERVIEW

If you have ever left a position, perhaps you were invited to an exit interview. Typically, the goal of an exit interview is to ascertain why the employee is leaving. The information can help employers change their practices going forward to retain future staff. But why not be more proactive? Why wait until an employee has already decided to leave before figuring out how to improve things?

Try setting up stay interviews to gather information on how teachers (and other staff members) feel about their working conditions and what they need to happily stay at their current school. Such reflective, one-on-one conversations between teachers and school leaders are critical for nurturing a healthy school culture, and stay interviews can show staff that you are invested in them for the long term.

Melissa Harvey, principal at Bobby Summers Middle School in Fate, Texas, first learned of stay interviews from a yearlong principal institute run by the nonprofit organization N2 Learning, through which school administrators collaborate with peers from other districts to learn about building and sustaining school transformation.

Stay interview questions should be tailored to each school environment. They might include inquiries like, "What do you look forward to when you come to work each day?" and "If you were to consider leaving this position, why would that be?" (Heubeck, 2022). Harvey chose her questions from a bank created with her principal institute cohort and piloted them with two teacher leaders and one teacher before finalizing them.

She offered her staff a chance to sign up for voluntary stay interviews, and many immediately signed up and sought her out. She reminded teachers that the process was about making things

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better for them and students. She told them, "You can be completely honest with me. You have my word that, when you walk out of the office, anything you say will not be held against you."

Harvey says the stay interviews were "amazing for my soul." Not every answer was positive, but she gained valuable insight, especially about what the teachers' "perfect school" looked like and steps they could take toward that vision. The teachers at her school were thankful to be listened to.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES' ROLE

Administrators' roles in schools are complex, and their responsibilities are many. They need support and collaboration to add new tasks like stay interviews. Instructional coaches are a great resource and, indeed, often a lifeline for administrators just as they are for teachers.

One way instructional coaches can help with stay interviews is to co-facilitate the analysis of the interview data. Coaches are skilled at stepping back and reflecting, so they are well-positioned to help leaders and teachers understand the data and how to apply it. They also tend to be skilled at building relationships and ensuring follow-through. Anytime we collect data in schools, the key is to make use of the data. Otherwise, teachers will see the exercise as a waste of time, at best, and become cynical and distrustful of leaders' intentions, at worst. Coaches can facilitate the conditions to make sure the data are used.

To ensure this process leads to long-term improvement, I recommend that coaches use the GPS process Kenny McKee and I laid out in our book, *Compassionate Coaching* (ASCD, 2021). Our GPS stands for goal, plan, and steps.

1. Set **goals** together as a staff of the ideal working environment at your school.
2. Develop a **plan**. What changes do you need to consider? What can be changed quickly? What will take more time?
3. Determine the **steps** necessary. Consider: How will you monitor changes over time? What will you do to course correct if you are veering off your desired plan?

While engaging in these steps, coaches and leaders should consider the following to make sure the stay interview data are useful and used.

- Organize the data anonymously so that teachers can be a part of the analysis and decision-making. Be clear with teachers from the outset that their insights may be shared but in an anonymous form.
- Look for trends with both the positive and challenging situations.
- Identify trends that can be celebrated right away — and celebrate them!
- Determine a few quick wins to make changes in the school environment immediately.

After these steps, leaders and coaches should monitor the changes over time and collect artifacts to share with staff about progress and areas in continuing need of improvement.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Not all administrators will feel the need to conduct stay interviews, and that's OK. There are other ways coaches can facilitate and incorporate teacher feedback. For example, coaches may want to consider conducting midyear checkpoints with teachers about the coaching opportunities in their school. The anonymous data collected could then be analyzed, keeping in mind similar considerations to those described above.

Whatever approach you take, the key is to find ways to build our school environments together. Teachers are the heart and soul of our schools, and they deserve to have a voice.

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Val Brown

NOVICE TEACHERS NEED SAFE SPACES TO LEARN AND GROW

I was fortunate because I had a secure support system. But new teachers shouldn't have to be lucky to get the support they need to succeed.

When I was a first-year teacher, my assistant principal came to my classroom one afternoon and handed me a letter to distribute to my students. The letter notified them and their caregivers that I was not a "highly qualified teacher," as defined by the state department of education. I had passed two subject area tests that granted me a temporary teaching license and was enrolled in a master's degree program, but I had not majored in education and still had to take several graduate-level courses to attain a professional certificate.

The assistant principal assured me my temporary status was insignificant, but the hundred pieces of paper I held in my hands felt weighty. Embarrassed, I buried them under other papers to be dealt with later in the week. But when there was no follow-up from my administrator, I quietly hid the letters in the bottom of the recycling bin. I felt shame.

At the same time, as a first-year teacher, I knew I needed to build trust with my students and their caregivers, and I knew I wouldn't do that by giving them a letter that said I was not highly qualified to teach.

What if I had handed out those letters? Would the community still have come to trust and respect me? I'll never know for certain, but I can easily imagine a scenario where they didn't and that their skepticism, combined with normal first-year teacher struggles, could have turned me off to teaching and prematurely ended my education career.

I DIDN'T BELONG

When I think about this story now, more than 19 years later, I am struck by the fact that state, district, and school administrators unintentionally but powerfully sent me the message that I did not belong in my chosen profession, the one I felt deeply passionate about. Even worse, they tasked me with sharing that message with my students and their parents.

We know that fewer young people are going into teaching, that far too many teachers leave the profession after just a few short years, and that schools are scrambling to fill vacancies. And in that context, I wonder how my experience — and especially the experiences of other novice educators who didn't stay in the profession — could have been different.

I was fortunate because I had a secure support system — I lived with my parents and only had to contribute nominally to the household income — and I used every free moment I could

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scrounge to seek formal and informal professional learning communities. But new teachers shouldn't have to be lucky to get the support they need to succeed.

Here are two aspects of school culture that administrators can address in a systematic way to provide novice — and all — educators the support they need to stay connected and engaged for the long term.

A SAFE PLACE TO BE VULNERABLE

During my first year, I attached myself to another first-year teacher. Although we taught different subjects, we were bonded by our inexperience. Our classrooms were down the hall from each other, and our physical proximity allowed us to lunch together, give each other emergency bathroom breaks, and talk frequently. In our discussions about school and district procedures, classroom management and student engagement, I could be vulnerable. I could ask the questions I felt I should already have answered, admit mistakes, and brainstorm ways to be better for my students as soon as the next bell rang.

This was different than the mentoring and coaching many systems provide to novice educators because we were at the same level and we felt comfortable being vulnerable with each other. After reading the letter that said I wasn't highly qualified, I couldn't imagine walking up to one of my administrators and asking for help. It felt like I would be saying, "You know what? Not only am I not highly qualified, but it is probably more accurate to say I am barely qualified!"

If administrators make it safer for teachers to be vulnerable and ask for the help they need, those teachers are more likely to grow into their roles and be successful in the short and long term. It is my hope that leaders will change school culture away from shame and toward vulnerability.

As you work toward that goal, consider:

If administrators make it safer for teachers to be vulnerable and ask for the help they need, those teachers are more likely to grow into their roles and be successful in the short and long term.

- What practices in your system — formal or informal, written or unwritten — might make educators, especially new educators, feel shame or that they do not belong?
- Are you inadvertently communicating a lack of confidence in your staff, as happened in my case?
- Are you suppressing teachers' voices — for example, by forbidding them to teach an inclusive curriculum?
- Are you communicating to educators that they can honestly and vulnerably seek help? Or are you more focused on communicating accountability requirements and measures of control?

A SAFE PLACE TO LEARN

While I was a first-year teacher, I was also a graduate student in education. In my courses, I read and discussed educational history, philosophy, policy, pedagogy, and how all of it impacted school, schooling, and students. Often, I applied my learning within a day or two. I would see results from my students, then share that and go deeper with my professors and classmates. It was exhausting, but it had a huge positive impact on my teaching.

While not every first-year teacher can or wants to be enrolled in a concurrent graduate program, they should all have opportunities to learn, engage in inquiry, apply new insights, and grow. As educators, leaders, and professional learning facilitators, we have an important role to play in cultivating such learning cultures. We can't expect teacher preparation programs to prepare teachers for everything they'll need to know, and we can't relegate learning to a handful of professional learning days each year.

Take a moment to imagine your ideal type of professional learning system for your staff and how it can create an ongoing learning culture.

- What type of system would you create if time and money were not a barrier?
- How can you provide more opportunities for authentic adult learning? What barriers would have to be removed?
- How could you ensure that professional learning does not contribute to feelings of burnout?
- How can you be honest with students and caregivers about what we know, what we do not know yet, and how we are improving?

A WAY FORWARD

We must provide all educators — novice and veteran — with opportunities to deepen their practice, and we must be steadfast in ensuring those opportunities include safe spaces for educators to learn and be vulnerable. Even with the learning supports I had, I still hang my head when I think about all I did not know as a first-year teacher. How can we do better for the next generation of new teachers?

While writing this column, I reached out to a student I taught my first year, who is now a student in a doctoral program. She said she remembered me having it all together. As unable as I was to admit what I didn't know back then, today I'm able to be vulnerable. I assured her that I did not have it all together and acknowledged I still have so much to learn. I'm proud that I have never stopped trying to be the most highly qualified educator I can be, and I want new teachers to know that's nothing to be ashamed of. ■

Laura L. Summers

TEACHER BURNOUT IS REAL, BUT THERE ARE SOLUTIONS

Wellness is bigger than any one activity or action. The cursory teacher appreciation week is not enough to address the need to build essential practices for sustained wellness.

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"How are the children?" is a question the Maasai people of East Africa ask in traditional salutation. The expected reply is, "All of the children are well." The understanding is that if the community is peaceful and well, it will manifest as the children being valued, cared for, and thriving (Cobb & Krownapple, 2019; O'Neill, 2015).

Similarly, when schools are working well, their success is reflected in thriving children.

Schools that set a goal of thriving aim to create a school culture "where all students benefit from a culture of belonging, while also providing engaging, well-rounded educational experiences that reflect who they are and are relevant to the world around them" (Nashville Public Education Foundation, n.d).

This type of school culture will only be created if the teachers also feel like they are valued and cared for by the school and district leadership, their colleagues, parents, and the community. A teacher's sense of support and well-being affects their ability to teach effectively (Kush et al., 2022).

Unfortunately, we cannot universally say that all of the children are well in our schools, and that is in part because educators are not well. School communities are struggling. Educators are struggling. A recent Gallup poll found that 52% of K-12 teachers are burned out — the highest burnout rate of all U.S. professions surveyed (Marken & Agrawal, 2022). Burnout results from perceived feelings of loss of control and workload in an environment where there is a perception of lack of fairness, value, or recognition. Recent conversations I've had with school, district, and organizational leaders all center on a common theme: Educators at all levels within the system are stressed, and there is not an easy, one-answer-fits-all fix.

This is why Learning Forward has created a space in all of the 2023 issues of *The Learning Professional* to explore educator wellness. To kick off this column, I want to be clear about what true wellness is — and isn't — because there are many misconceptions. Wellness is bigger than any one activity or action. For example, the cursory teacher appreciation week is not enough to address the need to build essential practices for sustained wellness.

As a researcher who focuses on educator wellness, I focus on eight key areas: physical, emotional, social, environmental, intellectual, financial, spiritual, and occupational wellness. I share strategies of support for sustained wellness within each of the eight key areas and coach educators on how to build resilience when times are challenging. Here are two strategies I recommend that cross multiple areas of wellness.

I usually start by asking educators when and how often they take a break. Science suggests that we need 10 hours of rest per day, and it's important to note that rest does not necessarily mean sleep. Participating in an enjoyable hobby, reading a book for pleasure, or partaking in physical activity regularly can all be restful if they are enjoyable. Taking a break improves job performance and reduces job stress. Just a few five-minute breaks scattered throughout the day

can help strengthen mental focus and clarity. I encourage educators to stretch, chat with a colleague, walk through the halls for a few minutes, or even simply take some deep breaths.

In a recent webinar I attended, an instructor described how she begins each of her classes with a minute of silent breathing, which allows students to recenter and be more present as they focus. Learning to Breathe is a research-based mindfulness curriculum for adolescents that has been adopted by school districts across the nation (**learning2breathe.org/**) and is providing teenagers with social and emotional learning skills they can use to navigate relationships and other life stressors. A teacher of Learning to Breathe said that she uses the same practices that the students use and feels like she is making more compassionate responses to her students.

Setting boundaries is another important step for wellness. The most compassionate people are the ones who have created boundaries around their time, according to sociologist and author Brené Brown (2020). A "no email in the evenings or on weekends" policy, which respects teachers' nonwork time, is one strategy that can help. Recently, I saw a good example of a high school principal modeling this behavior. After receiving a request on Friday, she sent a response on Monday that began by saying, "I really needed the weekend to rest and recover after almost losing one of our students to an overdose and being threatened … by a student."

Although all educators can take steps to implement these strategies, leaders are key for establishing the conditions and modeling the behaviors. For example, leaders can help with rest by scheduling yoga sessions for staff and students before school and with physical wellness by structuring meetings that allow for movement like having discussions while walking. They can also set the expectations for boundaries and commit to following them.

As author and activist bell hooks wrote, engaged pedagogy — which goes beyond merely teaching students curriculum standards or professional skills — requires that educators must commit "to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being" (hooks, 1994). That doesn't always come naturally to educators, who tend to enter the profession as caregivers. But if educators are going to continue to be there for their students, they must learn to take care of themselves and their colleagues first. Wellness needs to be a priority across the educational system.

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Continued from p. 8
voices and benefited students and our building's culture. As a result, teachers felt the professional learning or change was something that was being done with them, not to them.

The third standard — Leadership — may seem an obvious choice, but it's helpful to understand how it contributes to teacher retention.

Leadership: *Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning, sustain coherent support to build educator capacity, and advocate for professional learning by sharing the importance and evidence of impact of professional learning.*

This standard applies to a broad range of individuals across the education system, including those who do not have the word "leader" in their titles. I was not the only leader in my building. Grade-level chairs, content experts, and even students saw themselves as leaders and as part of creating and maintaining the vision of collective efficacy and mutual success. As a result, they not only felt a sense of loyalty and a desire to see the changes carried through, they also could see a long-term career path for themselves.

I take pride in the way my staff and I collaborated to grow and improve and that we had high levels of retention and satisfaction. This is a reflection of everyone's hard work and intentional commitment, not just mine. But I understood — and welcomed — the responsibility I had to create the conditions for that culture to grow.

As Jason Grissom and colleagues stated in their report, "Principals who are successful at retaining teachers take a proactive approach and focus on teacher growth, including building opportunities for teachers to collaborate." I encourage all school leaders to take that message to heart.

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aspirations, skills, attitudes, and behaviors — with her districts to assist them in beginning their professional learning plans.

Evidence: Jones uses a wide range of data points in designing the learning for the educators she supports. She uses surveys, polls, and protocol tools to gather information about her districts' progress. This allows her to gauge where they are in the process of developing a professional learning plan as well as determine any remaining gaps in knowledge. In addition, Jones focuses heavily on data use with her districts, helping them set goals and determine the data sources and systems they can use to monitor progress. She is building the capacity of her districts to determine meaningful ways to evaluate their work.

Learning Designs and Implementation: The districts in Jones's region are identifying the learning designs most appropriate for ensuring that their educators progress to full implementation of new instructional practices. The state provides the structured literacy training that the districts will use, so the focus for Jones and the educators she supports is to design the job-embedded follow-up for each district tailored to its level of capacity to support teachers. One of Jones' goals is to create a coherent system for how districts develop their professional learning plans by building foundational knowledge in high-quality professional learning, change management, and implementation sciences.

Culture of Collaborative Inquiry: As Jones works to drive the networks model into her region, her goal is to create an environment where educators work smarter, not harder, so that they are doing less but more effective work. Collaboration helps leaders and staff move toward this goal. Because districts are collaborating around similar problems of practice, they help each other access resources and ideas from districts across their region. In her next convening, Jones will use a structured protocol that allows districts to partner in a consultancy-type space to problem-solve around their progress. This kind of collaboration also helps the leaders build a culture of collective ownership for all of Ohio's students.

The Ohio Department of Education has committed to improving student learning, particularly in literacy, across the state. That doesn't mean all districts are approaching the work in the same way. Ohio has given school districts local control, which means that they are all approaching their challenges in ways that suit their contexts. The network model is essential because it allows districts to learn from and with each other by sharing what is working and what is not. By leveraging Standards for Professional Learning to guide their work, Ohio educators are engaging in meaningful learning and growing their practice for the benefit of students across the state. ■

EXAMINE. STUDY. UNDERSTAND.

RESEARCH

RESEARCH HOLDS CLUES TO RETENTION

Studies have found that professional learning plays an important role in teacher retention. In her Research Review column on p. 18, Elizabeth Foster highlights how districts and schools can leverage learning from the research to design their support accordingly.

RESEARCH REVIEW

Elizabeth Foster

LOOK TO RESEARCH FOR GUIDANCE ON RETAINING TEACHERS

Research suggests that professional learning has an important role to play in improving teacher retention. Districts and schools can leverage learning from the research to design their support accordingly.

Elizabeth Foster (elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org) is vice president, research & standards 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.

Teacher retention has been a chronic challenge in U.S. schools for decades. Around 10% of teachers leave each year (Sutcher et al., 2016), and that number appears to be rising as the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic take a toll on teacher morale and burnout.

According to a recent national survey, the percentage of teachers thinking about leaving the profession is 44% (Merrimack College, 2022), a number that has risen almost 15 percentage points in 10 years. Strikingly, 20% of teachers surveyed said they are "very likely" to leave. Even if many teachers don't follow through on these plans — which previous research suggests may be the case (Barnum, 2022) — the numbers are concerning.

Teacher attrition is more than an inconvenience. It negatively affects student learning and disrupts classroom relationships, staff coherence, and school culture. It has a great financial cost — estimated in the billions of dollars nationally — due to the administrative resources required to hire and support new teachers. There is also an incalculable loss of investments such as time, coaching, professional learning, and professional expertise. Compounding the problems, teacher turnover is at its worst in already underresourced schools. (See Barnes et al., 2007, and Berry et al., 2019, for a review of the research.)

What is driving teachers' intentions to leave? Teacher satisfaction levels were declining even before the pandemic, but a 2022 poll conducted by the National Education Association suggested that COVID-19 and its aftereffects have accelerated teachers' low morale and plans to leave.

A 2022 survey conducted by Merrimack College found that teachers are overwhelmed and disillusioned. According to the 2022 survey, which followed the model of the now-discontinued MetLife *Survey of the American Teacher* and included a representative sample of 1,300 public school teachers, the percentage of teachers who are "very satisfied" with their jobs is just 12% — a 25-year low.

There is an equity consideration in these numbers as well. The Merrimack survey found that Black teachers are more likely than white teachers to say they plan to leave their schools or stop teaching entirely. This is perhaps because Black teachers report spending more hours working and more time on planning and administrative tasks than white and Hispanic teachers. Black teachers reported working an average of 65 hours per week, compared with 53 and 48 hours per week for white and Hispanic teachers, respectively. Black teachers also reported spending less time teaching (20 hours per week) than white and Hispanic teachers (25 hours per week).

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Although the surveys cited here found that salaries are certainly a factor in teachers' dissatisfaction, a perceived lack of respect and support are also important factors. Less than half of teachers in the Merrimack survey believed that the general public respects and values them as professionals, a number that fell to only 30% among teachers who are very dissatisfied with their jobs. Among that same very dissatisfied group, 31% of teachers said they have no one to turn to for professional mentorship and support.

This suggests that professional learning has an important role to play in improving teacher retention. Indeed, other studies have found that professional learning makes a difference. Districts and schools can leverage learning from the research to design their support accordingly.

One study (Shuls, 2020) examined the three districts with the best retention statistics in the state of Missouri. Through interviews with key stakeholders, the researchers found that one key retention factor is a culture in which professional learning includes opportunities for educators to learn from other educators or teach other educators. (District leaders also cited the importance of coaches, mentors, job-alike mentors, and "buddy teachers.")

All three districts were committed to personalizing their professional learning to teachers' needs and areas for professional growth, rather than providing a one-size-fits-all approach. The three districts also shared a commitment to new teacher induction and mentoring and to leadership training for teachers interested in advancing to leadership positions.

In the Merrimack College survey described above, large majorities of teachers (90%+) reported that they are most likely to seek support from fellow teachers and colleagues. Yet, they reported having only an average of two hours per week for teamwork and planning and just one hour in professional development, suggesting that schools could be more responsive to the kinds of support teachers want.

The Learning Policy Institute looked at factors predicting teacher retention in North Carolina, in a study conducted in collaboration with WestEd and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University (Berry et al., 2021). Professional learning and collaboration was one of six working conditions (out of nine studied) that predicted higher rates of teacher retention, especially in high-poverty schools.

The findings also showed that the following characteristics of professional learning were associated with greater retention: professional learning that aligns with school improvement plans, encourages reflection on practice, and offers opportunities for follow-up efforts that relate to specific training. (Two other significant working conditions were also related to educator growth and development: teacher and school leadership and teachers' collective practice and efficacy.)

STANDARDS IN PRACTICE

For professional learning to lead to higher teacher satisfaction, retention, and effectiveness, it must be high-quality. Standards for Professional Learning describe what high-quality looks like, and the conditions that are likely to improve retention are woven throughout. For example:

- The **Culture of Collaborative Inquiry** standard highlights the value of all educators engaging in and sustaining a culture of support and collective responsibility for all students.
- The **Implementation** standard stresses the value of ongoing and meaningful support from coaches, mentors, and colleagues.
- The **Leadership** standard emphasizes leaders' roles in responding to educators' working conditions, concerns, and specific support needs, as well as establishing opportunities for educators to grow and take on new roles.

Together, these and other standards can help professional learning leaders create a culture of sustained support that can contribute to educators' sense of belonging, shared ownership, and collective investment in the school and the work that may lead to long-term retention.

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DATA POINTS

48% OF PRINCIPALS COME FROM ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP

Researchers from Oregon studied 14 years of administrative data from that state to understand public school principals' career paths. Principals had accrued most of their experience within the state but not necessarily in their current district. Just under half (48%) of new principals came from an assistant principal role, while 19% came from a classroom teaching position and 33% came from another role. The authors recommend differentiated support for principals based on their career paths, writing, "For instance, those coming through pathways other than the [assistant principal] may not gain access to the same degree of mentorship available to those who do." On the other hand, they point out, those principals may also bring other skills that could be valuable to share with colleagues.
bit.ly/3HHU35B

2 WAYS STATES CAN CULTIVATE HIGH-QUALITY PRINCIPALS

In a synthesis of two principal improvement initiatives supported by The Wallace Foundation, Paul Manna found that states are uniquely positioned to enable principal success through two types of support: activation of state standards and fostering high-impact networked partnerships connecting districts, universities, and expert professional organizations. The report not only presents evidence that underscores the importance of state policymakers' support but also points to previous research showing that leadership is among the most important factors in student success.
bit.ly/3DLvaoD

12 WEEKS TO GREATER COMPASSION

Teachers from an urban Title I school engaged in 12 weeks of professional learning about trauma-informed practice and shared their perceptions of their attitudes, practices, classroom climate, and personal well-being. The professional learning included interactive presentations, live practice of learned strategies, in-classroom implementation support, and expert feedback on self-reflective journal entries. After 12 weeks, teachers reported significantly higher levels of compassion satisfaction and lower levels of secondary traumatic stress. Levels of burnout did not change significantly. Focus group data suggested that teachers felt they developed higher levels of empathy, patience, and calmness, and that they began to "depersonalize student behavior and alter their responses from discipline and punishment to ones of compassion and support."
bit.ly/3RJzsCP

6 DOMAINS OF TEACHER EXPERTISE

Researchers from the United Kingdom and Turkey conducted what they call the "first systemic metasummary" of research on what makes for an expert teacher. Acknowledging a lack of clarity about the concept, they sought to create a prototype of an expert teacher by looking at 106 studies from 16 countries that described some or all participants as experts. These studies described 73 characteristics of expert teachers, which the researchers categorized in six domains relating to cognition, personal attributes, professionalism, and pedagogical practices. Several of the characteristics relate to aspects of high-quality professional learning. For example, "Expert teachers reflect extensively and often critically on their practice, help their colleagues frequently, and are continuous learners throughout their careers."
bit.ly/3RLGSp8

1 TOOL TO IMPROVE PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Researchers from multiple countries proposed a new research instrument, the In-Service Teacher Training Survey Instrument, to address a lack of consistent evaluation of professional development programs. Applying the instrument to 33 programs identified as effective in previous rigorous studies, they identified characteristics of effectiveness, including programs that link participation to financial or promotion incentives, have a specific focus, include opportunities for practice, and include a face-to-face aspect. Follow-up interviews also identified mentoring follow-up visits and materials to help teachers apply what they learned. The researchers then applied the instrument to 139 government-funded, at-scale programs across 14 countries to determine whether the professional learning most teachers experience embodies these characteristics. They found that very few programs provide incentives or follow-up support. The authors interpret the results as evidence of a troubling gap between typical programs and high-quality approaches.
bit.ly/3IlyccB

INFORM. ENGAGE. IMMERSE.

FOCUS

TACKLING TURNOVER

WHAT CAN WE DO TO RETAIN EDUCATORS?

Turnover is a challenge across all roles in education systems — for teachers, coaches, principals, superintendents, and others. This issue's Focus authors explain how professional learning can support and stabilize the workforce at multiple levels.

A supported workforce is a strong workforce

MISSOURI CENTERS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN ITS PLAN TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TEACHERS

BY PAUL KATNIK

Like most U.S. states, Missouri is struggling with teacher shortages. In our public schools, which serve nearly 900,000 students, shortages have typically been concentrated in urban and rural areas, and in content areas of special education, math, and science. Recently, however, shortages have begun broadly impacting more schools in more parts of the state and more content areas.

As sobering as these challenges are, Missouri is committed to efforts that will result in real change to ensure a well-prepared, stable, satisfied, and high-quality workforce so that all children have access to an excellent education. High-quality, standards-aligned professional learning is a key part of our multifaceted strategy.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

In data collected through Missouri's Core Data Collection System (**dese.mo.gov/data-system-management/core-datamosis**), three-year trend data for educator vacancies shows a 3% increase of overall vacancies. The shortage issues become more challenging when coupled with a drop of over 30% in appropriately certified applicants for those vacancies — and closer to 40% for our state's top 20 shortage areas.

Some of this shortage can be attributed to declining numbers of teacher candidates entering and graduating from certification programs. The number of teacher candidates who have completed their programs and are now eligible for certification is about 30% less than a decade ago (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022). Although that has increased slightly in recent years, it is still far below where it used to be.

But teacher attrition is a contributing factor as well. In data provided by the Public School Retirement System (PSRS) of Missouri, there was nearly a 10% increase in the number of retirements over the previous year and close to 23% increase over the year before that. Furthermore, according to a survey by one of Missouri's teacher associations, more than 50% of teachers say they often or very often consider leaving the profession, citing the stresses of poor compensation, student behavior and motivation challenges, and shortages of substitute teachers (MSTA, 2021).

Of particular concern, workforce data, collected through Missouri's Core Data Collection System, highlights low retention rates among early career teachers. Averaging trends from the last six years, half of new teachers have left at or by the end of their third year of teaching, and about 60% have left at or by the end of their fifth year of teaching. As a result, according to data from the Core Data Collection System, 26% of Missouri teachers have fewer than five years of teaching experience and an additional 21% have less than 10 years of teaching experience. This is concerning, given that research has consistently maintained that, on average, students get better learning outcomes from more experienced teachers (Kini & Podolsky, 2016), and almost half of the Missouri teacher workforce has 10 years of teaching experience or less (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022).

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

These challenges are daunting, but not insurmountable. To address them and strengthen our workforce, Missouri is taking steps to recruit, support, and retain teachers. The State Board of Education established a commission focused on teacher recruitment and retention, and nearly $55 million has been directed toward recruitment and retention grants to directly address the supply and demand issues of teachers in the state.

This funding includes $11 million to create and develop grow-your-own programs in 85% of school districts and charter schools, all educator preparation programs, and all community colleges, to develop a cadre of new teachers who will be engaged and invested for the long-term. Forty million dollars in grant funds are being used to increase retention of current teachers through strategies such as mentoring for new teachers and expanding teacher voice and leadership opportunities. Professional learning is a key part of this investment, as research has consistently maintained the positive correlation between high-quality professional

learning, including mentoring, and increased teacher retention (Rodgers & Skelton, 2014).

The simple truth is that professional learning matters because it improves teachers' knowledge and skills and helps strengthen their problem-solving skills, encourage new and innovative approaches, and revitalize their growth mindset (McCann, 2022). Just as importantly, it shows teachers that we are invested in them and their growth in the profession. We believe it can improve teacher retention as well.

Although professional learning has always been important for improving instruction, providing teachers with effective strategies for managing student behaviors, and addressing the social and emotional needs of students, these areas have become particularly important in the three years since the pandemic started and exacerbated teacher retention issues. The past several years have had a profound impact on students' learning and teachers' working conditions.

Even after students and teachers returned to in-person learning after school buildings closed in 2020, it was anything but business as usual. To address the growing and changing needs of our students, our teachers and leaders must have professional learning and support to be successful with strategies such as intensive tutoring, more effective use of technology, and identifying and addressing student trauma.

ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING

Too often, states, districts, and school administrators fail to establish the necessary conditions to ensure that professional learning is high-quality. To ensure that the professional learning we support embodies best practices and impacts teaching and learning, Missouri has established professional learning guidelines.

These guidelines provide information on the mission, mandates, and regulations for professional learning, including the requirement that school districts spend 1% of their annual state funding on professional learning for their teachers and leaders, information about statutorily required professional development committees, and direction on how to budget funds that will support high-quality professional learning, with resources, tools, and examples of best practices. The guidelines also include information about professional learning roles, responsibilities, and standards, guided by Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2022).

Consistent with the standards, we want to ensure that professional learning is:

- Sustained: extends beyond just the learning activity itself with continued follow-up learning and opportunities for application;
- Intensive: concentrated, thorough, and vigorous;
- Collaborative: includes opportunities for teachers to engage, learn, and interact together to improve teaching and learning;
- Job-embedded: directly focused on the day-to-day teaching practices of teachers and their work with students;
- Data-driven: guides adjustments and modifications to instruction based on formal and informal assessment data; and
- Classroom-focused: is intent on improving the teaching and learning that goes on in students' lives in their classrooms.

EVALUATING OUR EFFORTS

As part of our commitment to ensuring effectiveness, we set up a four-phase external evaluation process for the teacher recruitment and retention grants, which is being conducted by the Community Training and Assistance Center. To date, the phase one and phase two evaluations have been completed (Liang & Slotnik, 2022a; 2022b). Phase one focused on building an initial understanding of the strategies selected by local education agencies and teacher education institutions, and phase two examined the initial implementation of the grants and early indicators of success. Here are highlights of the phase two evaluation.

The vast majority (95%) of lead contacts at local education agencies reported that teacher retention is essential or high priority in their district. They also indicated that this is a challenge, with about two-thirds saying it is extremely or very difficult to retain teachers in specific content areas and racially/ethnically diverse teachers, and around half saying it is extremely or very difficult to retain male teachers, experienced teachers, and teachers for schools in hard-to-staff locations.

When asked about their approaches to improving retention, local education agencies reported a range of strategies and supports that include professional learning in the form of mentoring and leadership opportunities. They focused not only on instrumental factors such as higher pay and more availability of substitutes, but also creating a culture where teachers feel appreciated and valued, have higher morale, and increased job satisfaction. The following are some of the local education agency lead contact comments noted in the report:

- "We have prioritized giving teachers voices through a teacher leadership team that allows them direct impact on their work environment. Mentor/mentee programs have also been a priority. Having a support system is key."
- "Teachers feeling supported helps us to retain quality teachers, which ultimately works as a recruitment effort for new staff."
- "We focus on showing our teachers that they are valued and heard. We intend to promote pride in the profession in our efforts to attract and retain our staff."

Evaluators examined how many local education agencies reported that they are using the 11 research-based

strategies that the state education department provides for teacher retention, including four that are directly related to professional learning. Forty percent said that they are implementing professional learning to teachers based on needs identified by staff; 27% said they are strengthening mentor programs for early career teachers, and 15% said they are using the funding to provide or increase stipends to the mentors; and 6% said they are implementing professional learning for teachers on strategies addressing the social and emotional needs of their students. Local education agencies with high vacancy rates were particularly likely to focus on the mentoring and needs-based professional learning strategies.

Local education agency lead contacts are generally positive about the quality of implementation of their teacher retention grants so far. Nearly all (93%) said that their local education agencies are implementing the grant as designed. Most (72% to 87%) also believe they are using research-based strategies and technology, assigning sufficient personnel, collaborating with partners for the grant implementation, and using data and evaluation to monitor implementation and impact of the grant. For example:

- "Our qualitative measures include a survey to determine if teachers stayed, in part, because of our retention efforts. The quantitative measures include documenting the number of teachers who stay in the teaching profession at our district each year."
- "We will monitor the number of participants and retention data of participants. Additionally, survey data will be collected from participants that assess benefits of participation, impact on work satisfaction, and impact on future career plans."
- "We will compare our teacher retention percentages at the end of next school year to our previous years. We will also look at how many paras utilize the opportunity to pursue teaching certifications in the next couple of school years."

Half of local education agencies said they have started to collect the data to measure the impact of their teacher retention grants, and some say they are already seeing early indicators of success, particularly in retaining experienced teachers, teachers in specific content areas, male teachers, and teachers in hard-to-staff locations. These findings should be interpreted with caution because most local education agencies are early in the implementation process and some have not yet begun implementation. Percentages reported in the report therefore do not represent all grantees' efforts.

In interviews, local education agency lead contacts shared some specific early indicators of success, including the following:

- "A couple of teachers stayed after being recruited by other districts. One factor was the efforts we are making to improve morale and offer another discipline option."
- "The strategies we have implemented have been beneficial. Exit interviews reflect a high level of satisfaction of teachers with the district and the profession."
- "Early indicators tell us both teacher satisfaction and student achievement has increased."

ENCOURAGING RESULTS

Although we are in the early stages of implementing and evaluating our state's teacher recruitment and retention efforts, we are encouraged by the results so far. The fact that the vast majority of local education agencies, working closely and collaboratively with Missouri's teacher education programs and community colleges, believe teacher recruitment and retention are high priorities tells us that we have strong partners who are committed to strengthening the teacher workforce.

The third phase of evaluation will take place in spring 2023 when we compile and analyze the data being collected by local education agencies, teacher education programs, and community colleges. As we move forward with these efforts and with evaluating their impact, we invite other learning professionals to follow along and learn with us.

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When we invest in coaching, we invest in teachers

BY KIM COFINO

After several years of operating in crisis mode, many teachers are feeling exhausted and burned out. More than ever, they need to feel appreciated, valued, and respected to be resilient in the face of ongoing stress. One of the best ways to show appreciation for teachers is to value their professional growth and provide support to address their needs and achieve their goals. Instructional coaches provide exactly that kind of support.

Coaches listen, see the possibility in every teacher, and provide customized professional learning based on teachers' needs and goals. Instructional coaching, when implemented successfully, can be the key driver of both teacher retention and continued, long-term, sustainable professional growth in schools. When we invest in coaching, we invest in teachers.

To illustrate the many ways coaching can support teacher retention, this article will unpack some statements

When schools create a culture of coaching and commit to the structures, policies, and leadership vision that need to be in place to make coaching a success, they are creating a sustainable environment for professional growth, where teachers feel valued and championed as the experts they are.

from expert educators from around the world who have appeared on my weekly podcast, #coachbetter, which features interviews with teachers, coaches, and leaders from international schools. The quotes incorporated here were selected from a range of podcast conversations from the years 2019-22 about instructional coaching and its impact on high-quality professional learning, sustainable school growth, teacher satisfaction, and teacher retention.

The podcast and educator insights shared in this article are grounded in a clear definition of what effective instructional coaching is — and isn't. Coaching should be an invitational process that is nonevaluative and not tied to appraisal. Coaching should start with a teacher's own professional and instructional goals, involve a thoughtfully designed coaching cycle or similar system that incorporates teacher self-reflection, and operate close to the classroom, with observation, co-teaching, or modeling as a central part of the experience. If any of these components are not in place — especially the element of being nonevaluative — coaching can end up feeling like an imposition on teachers rather than the positive support and guidance that it is designed to be.

Coaches show an investment in teachers and empower them to grow.

We know that when schools and leaders invest in teachers, they are investing in students. When teachers feel valued, they bring that feeling of support and joy into their classrooms. When schools create a culture of coaching, when they commit to the structures, policies, and leadership vision that need to be in place to make coaching a success, they are creating a sustainable environment for professional growth, where teachers feel valued and championed as the experts they are.

As education leader and author Brad Johnson says, "To the people who say it's all about the kids, just remember the kids are learning in an environment created by the teacher. A teacher who is supported, encouraged, and appreciated will create a more positive and dynamic learning environment than a teacher who is not supported that way" (Johnson, 2022).

At a learning-focused school, learning is for everyone, not just students. When schools make an investment in the professional learning of all educators, the value placed on learning is explicitly clear. Carrie Zimmer, classroom teacher at Dunecrest Dubai, notes that "the school needs to have established a community where learning is for everyone. If a school believes in that, they should believe in the coach as a facilitator of that learning."

Coaches work with teachers to identify their professional goals and support teachers in making the changes needed to achieve their goals. In doing so, they are creating an environment that promotes success. Niki Dinsdale, counselor at United World College Southeast Asia in Singapore, says that "coaching highlights my own self-worth. I'm worth stopping and thinking about my professional growth."

In this way, coaching can help teachers feel that their learning is valued, that they are a valuable member of the school community, and that their professional growth is an important part of being a teacher — all of which directly impacts overall teacher happiness and thereby teacher retention.

Coaches personalize teacher learning in a nonevaluative way.

When coaches are able to facilitate professional learning within the classroom context, with actual students, in the exact situation that teachers are managing on a daily basis, the process is clear and achievable and the impact is visible immediately. As

James MacDonald, head of school at International School Brussels, notes, "The more we can individualize [professional development], the more we can move forward as a school." You can't get any closer to personalized, authentic learning opportunities than having coaches in the school working with teachers in their classrooms every day.

In addition, because they're in a nonevaluative position, coaches can help teachers keep a growth mindset in a nonthreatening way when helping bring about this kind of personalized learning. Increased teacher retention is just one of the many positive outgrowths of a situation where teachers feel they are receiving personal support as professionals and individuals within a safe learning environment.

This kind of support can have a domino effect leading to a broader acceptance of coaching as a positive feature of a school community, rather than something imposed on teachers from above. Jen Ricks, director of teaching and learning at the American School of Abu Dhabi, reminds us that "the common view in education is that you must be 'bad' if you need a coach, but when we think about elite athletes and high-level executives (for example), they have coaches, that's the norm, and we expect that. We should expect the same as educators."

Coaches have the time and focus to become experts in what teachers are doing, and know what works by connecting teachers to each other and sharing and celebrating success (without evaluation pressure). Jim Laney, former head of the American Embassy School of New Delhi, acknowledged that "education is typically very flat — you may have 50 teachers supervised by one leader. It's not a real supportive environment for growing and learning. Coaching helps fill that gap and creates a step for those strong teachers to take the next step."

Coaches have a whole-school perspective.

Coaches may be among the only nonadministrative faculty members who have a whole-school perspective. They have the opportunity to see what's happening in a variety of grade levels and subject areas. They have the availability to cross divisions and engage in deep conversations with teachers and leaders. This means instructional coaches can take the big-picture messaging of whole-school professional learning and customize it for teams or individuals based on need.

Ensuring that there is continuity in our professional learning has a profound impact. Coaches are the bridge between schoolwide goals and individual needs — avoiding perceived mismatches between the school's direction and where teachers are, and thus promoting greater teacher retention.

Beth Dressler, deputy head of school at Dresden International School in Germany, notes that "coaches come in with a bird's-eye view of the school and have a relationship with the teacher, so they can sometimes see things the teachers can't see." Coaches can take whole-school goals and connect and translate them to an individual level, so that they're customized based on what exactly is happening in that teacher's classroom.

Anne Marie Chow, former middle school vice principal at United World College Southeast Asia in Singapore, notes, "With whole-school [professional development], you're going to get 60%-75% relevancy for teachers, but when you have a coach working with an individual or a team that has identified this desire to get better at their practice, you're going to get 100% relevancy. Everything the coach puts in is going to go back and impact student learning."

Because schools are dynamic learning spaces, and we're always assessing, reflecting, adapting, and changing our goals, ensuring that there is continuity in our professional learning has a profound impact. Coaches are the bridge between schoolwide goals and individual needs — avoiding perceived mismatches between the school's direction and where teachers are, and thus promoting greater teacher retention. As John D'Arcy, former deputy head of school at Western Academy of Beijing, pointed out, "Effective coaches are experts at finding the sweet spot between understanding the school's strategic goals and teachers' enthusiasm and energy."

Coaching programs encourage long-term teacher development, not quick fixes.

School leaders invest extensive time, money, and energy in hiring just the right educators and bringing them into their school community. Those high-quality teachers are likely people who are engaged in their own professional growth and thus they expect to be supported by the school. To address this, many schools offer annual professional learning funds for teachers, but without school-based structures for support, is that really the most effective investment? Without professional growth support inherent in the school structure, like an instructional coaching program, those teachers may be more likely to make the decision to move on.

When we create a coaching environment with consistency over time, that's when we will see the biggest impact. According to author and education consultant Steve Barkley, "Today's teaching goals are so complex that you can't approach them in an isolated single-year scenario" — and that was before the pandemic. Our challenges grow more complex each day. Without a long-term view on individual and team professional growth, we'll continue to be stuck applying disposable bandages to life-threatening wounds.

Expecting that sending teachers to

conferences and other one-off learning experiences will have a long-term impact on professional growth is often unrealistic — especially if the growth is expected to spread beyond the individual teacher who attended the event. Without any long-term, contextual support within the school setting, inspiration from external events often ends shortly thereafter. When teachers walk away from events with long lists of things to try but don't have the support to make that happen in their classrooms, the lists stay "wishes" — and teachers grow frustrated at not being able to translate their professional learning into reality, which can negatively affect teacher retention. Coaches help teachers turn inspiration into action on a regular basis — with their students, in their school community.

The long-term investment in a coach will make a lasting impact on a much-larger group of educators than any one-off conference or consultant visit. Long-term personalized learning within the context of the school — held physically in the classroom spaces at the school, and with someone who knows the teachers, the school, the context, and can work with them over a long period of time — will make a bigger impact over time.

LEADING THE CHANGE

Keeping all this in mind, it's clear that creating an effective coaching program that fosters teacher retention is a long-term project that requires lasting changes to be implemented over time. As school leaders consider whether to invest in coaching, it's important to remember that it is not realistic to expect to see this kind of professional growth in the first year (or the first iteration) of a coaching program. As James Dalziel, head of school at NIST International School Thailand, points out, "When building a coaching culture, leaders need to understand and recognize how long change takes in a school. It will take time to embed a coaching culture within the norms of the school."

LINKS TO PODCASTS QUOTED IN THIS ARTICLE

- **Steve Barkley:** "Personalize Coaching for Every Teacher," coachbetter.tv/episode-55/
- **Anne Marie Chow:** "Building a Coaching Culture With Both Cognitive Coaching & Instructional Coaching," coachbetter.tv/episode-140/
- **James Dalziel:** "Building a Coaching Culture," coachbetter.tv/episode-72/
- **John D'Arcy:** "Creating an Empowered Community of Learners," coachbetter.tv/episode-37/
- **Niki Dinsdale:** "Instructional Coaching as an Intellectual Spa," coachbetter.tv/episode-39/
- **Beth Dressler:** "Coaches as Learning Partners," coachbetter.tv/episode-43/
- **Jim Laney:** "How Instructional Coaching Supports Professional Growth at All Levels of the School," coachbetter.tv/episode-86/
- **James MacDonald:** "Essential Coaching Skills That Can Make You a Better Leader," coachbetter.tv/episode-79/
- **Jen Ricks:** "Building a Coaching Program," coachbetter.tv/episode-172
- **Carrie Zimmer:** "Teacher Spotlight," coachbetter.tv/episode-50/

When working to establish a coaching culture, leaders can model leading the change by demonstrating their own personal commitment to coaching, perhaps even by being coached themselves. When leaders visibly invest in coaching themselves, they set the stage for coaching to be valued by all staff members. Jen Ricks says, "The time to sit down and think about what you're doing, to have those reflective conversations, is so important. It needs to be normalized in schools."

Although creating a coaching culture will not happen overnight, it is possible to start with just one dedicated coach. If you're in a school right now, and you are a coach, or you want to be a coach, or your coaching program is struggling, it's important to talk with your school leaders to help them understand why coaching is so valuable, especially during this period of widespread teacher attrition and turnover, and why they should start and stay the course.

DEVELOP A COACHING CULTURE

Whether your school already has an established coaching culture, or is just considering implementing an instructional coaching program, investing in and building a coaching culture can have a lasting impact on teacher retention and professional growth. Educators, like all employees, choose to stay when they feel safe, fulfilled, respected, and valued in their work. Instructional coaching allows schools to develop exactly this kind of culture. When we build communities of growth-minded educators and leaders, we are creating schools where teachers and students are happy and engaged in their learning, and that's precisely the sort of environment where teachers want to stay, and grow, over the long term.

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How districts and states are addressing teacher turnover

BY LISA LACHLAN-HACHÉ, LOIS KIMMEL, CHERYL KROHN, DAWN DOLBY, AND TAMMIE CAUSEY-KONATÉ

Open your morning news app, and you'll likely find an article that suggests the teaching profession is in crisis. Headlines shout, "Never seen it this bad" (Walker, 2021). Reports highlight the status of the teaching profession is at a 50-year low, noting sobering statistics about low teacher morale, the loss of professional prestige, lack of student interest to pursue teaching, and increased percentages of teachers thinking about leaving (Marken & Agrawal, 2022; Mission Square Research Institute, 2021; Steiner & Woo, 2021).

Solutions often focus on recruiting more candidates into the profession. Although such approaches are important, another element critical to success doesn't get enough attention: retaining the teachers serving in classrooms now. While recruitment efforts focus on building the profession over the long term, retention efforts are essential for maintaining and improving the quality of teaching today.

Our work at the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders recognizes the

need for a comprehensive approach to address shortages across the talent development continuum (see figure at right): attracting students into the profession, preparing candidates to become learner-ready on day one, and developing, supporting, and retaining teachers in the profession.

In this article, we focus on the developing, supporting, and retaining teachers quadrant of the talent development framework because it is most often overlooked yet vital.

Research illustrates the detrimental effects teacher turnover has on student satisfaction and achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Evidence also suggests that teacher experience is correlated with teacher effectiveness (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). If teachers are leaving within the first three years, students are missing out on the impact of experienced teachers, and teachers miss the opportunity to improve and find success.

Furthermore, national data suggests that teachers of color leave the profession at higher rates due to more challenging working conditions, fewer supports, and systems working against them (Brown, 2022; Dixon et al., 2019; Ingersoll et al., 2017). Given that research suggests student-teacher race match has a positive impact on students of color in the short and long term (Gershenson et al., 2018), the high turnover rate of teachers of color is alarming.

The talent development framework addresses multiple dimensions of teacher retention, including high-quality mentoring, differentiated staffing models, job-embedded professional learning, financial incentives, inclusive teaching environments, responsive working conditions, and strong leadership for healthy and supportive schools and advancing equity. The examples we provide here focus on teacher development and support, with implications for professional learning leaders.

CENTER ON GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS TALENT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Source: Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2020.

They are based on an extensive review of programs focused on educator shortages and workforce diversity conducted in 2022. These examples do not represent an exhaustive list of approaches leaders can take, but rather highlight entry points and action steps learning professionals may choose to emulate in their own contexts.

DEVELOPING BEGINNING TEACHERS

Many new teachers joining the profession today experienced interrupted inservice placements or truncated preservice support due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. A lack of preparation can lead new teachers to feel overwhelmed and potentially to attrition. To address the growing need for mentoring and induction supports for new teachers, states and districts are ramping up supports with new federal funding.

For example, new teachers in Georgia receive intensive mentoring and induction support that infuse high-leverage practices with simulated classroom experience, allowing them critical opportunities to prepare to be learner-ready as they approach their first days in the classroom. The Ohio Department of Education is also focusing on mentoring and induction, with a special emphasis on supporting new teachers from underrepresented backgrounds with culturally responsive mentoring that acknowledges the unique struggles that new teachers of color experience.

CREATING INCLUSIVE TEACHING ENVIRONMENTS

Culturally affirming and healthy workspaces enable educators to bring their authentic selves to the work of teaching and may lead to greater retention rates for teachers of color (Dixon et al., 2019). Professional learning — for example, in partnership with organizations like the Center for Black Educator Development — can help leaders and other staff do more to create such environments.

Educators at Park Spanish Immersion Elementary School in suburban Minneapolis, Minnesota, are examining their cultural competency and determining ways to make their school culture more racially and ethnically inclusive. The Supporting Inclusive and Diverse Educator Environments partnership engaged 45 members of the school's leadership team in learning about cultural proficiency, continuous leadership coaching focused on building an inclusive school culture, affinity groups to develop teacher peer support, and mentor preparation.

DIFFERENTIATING STAFFING STRUCTURES

Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College is working closely with Mesa Public Schools to design a new model of co-teaching, building on Public Impact's Opportunity Culture model, which has shown positive effects on collaborative professional learning, teacher satisfaction, and student learning (Backes & Hansen, 2018; Garcia et al., 2021).

The new model builds teams of educators with distributed expertise, including an education leader (who leads teams, schools, or systems), professional educators (preservice, novice, experienced, and specialist teachers), community educators (prepared members of the community), and paraeducators who complement the work of professional educators. Teams work and grow together, building on and learning from one another throughout the school day.

Early results suggest that educators participating in the model are more satisfied, collaborate more, and believe they have better teacher-student interactions (Arizona Impact, 2022; Maddin, 2023) — factors that lay the groundwork for a more stable and satisfied workforce. The project is now scaling up with funding from a Teacher and School Leader Grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

BUILDING TEACHERS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

Teachers say they face increasing challenges with student behavior and mental health struggles and report a need for more training and strategies to deal with those challenges (Mahnken, 2023). Such feelings likely contribute to high rates of teacher burnout.

To address these challenges, districts are helping teachers develop their competencies in social and emotional learning (SEL). In J. Sterling Morton High School District 201 in Cicero, Illinois, and Pasco County Schools in Florida, teachers are growing their social and emotional competencies by embedding SEL standards into their curriculum and daily instruction to ensure SEL becomes part of teacher behavior, classroom practice, and school climate.

Instructional coaches in these districts support teachers in advancing their SEL practices through co-planning, modeling, and feedback on student engagement with SEL strategies and standards. Our center developed a self-assessment, in partnership with National University, for educators to reflect on their own social and emotional competencies and practices (Yoder, 2022).

Teachers can then engage in asynchronous online modules co-developed by Inspire: Leading in Learning and the American Institutes for Research that cover topics such as the neuroscience of emotions, self-compassion and self-regulation, teamwork, and problem-solving, among others (Inspire: Leading in Learning, n.d.).

BUILDING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Teachers' experiences are influenced directly and indirectly by school and district leaders, who also have challenges and are at risk for attrition (Steiner et al., 2022). Supporting leaders to build their leadership skills benefits not just leaders themselves, but everyone in the school community.

Some school leadership preparation programs — which are sometimes designed in partnership with districts and states — are working to address the challenges facing leaders today, including high levels of student and teacher stress, student learning loss, and inequity. These efforts work best when they are designed to be systemic and program-wide.

For example, rather than having a single course on equity, culturally responsive pedagogy, or social and emotional learning, the Institute of School Leadership & Administration Faculty at Loyola Marymount University is revising the curriculum to embed these critical topics in all aspects of principal preparation, including school finance, setting instructional visions, and even setting school schedules. These leaders will be better prepared to create healthy and supportive schools where teachers are more likely to stay.

In the Educator Preparation Laboratory, Learning Policy Institute and the Bank Street Graduate School of Education are co-leading a collaboration among 15 teacher and principal preparation programs designed to develop and document models that prepare educators and leaders to advance equity and the science of learning. This work supports educators in being better prepared for their classrooms through equity-focused and responsive practices that can lead to their retention in the profession.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The strategies presented here can be combined with other elements of the talent development continuum, including improving working conditions and teacher compensation. This can be a complicated undertaking, but several factors can help.

Collaboration among schools, districts, states, universities, and intermediaries is important. We promote partnerships like these in the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

National Collaboratives (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2022a; Mason-Williams et al., 2020) to ensure all players who have a role in supporting teachers have a seat at the table.

Using data to drive decisions is also essential. Data tools can help, such as our center's Diversifying the Educator Workforce Data Tool (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2021) and Geographic Information System maps (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2022b), which support state and local leaders to identify shortages and diversity gaps in their systems.

In our National Collaboratives, we support teams as they examine the data to look at all stages of the career development continuum. We work together to analyze disaggregated data, engage stakeholders, select actions and evidence-based strategies, and monitor and continuously revise and revamp to better prioritize areas of need based on local context.

With all of these strategies, teacher voice matters. Increasing teacher voice in school decisions not only adds important insights to the process, but can increase satisfaction, buy-in, and sense of school community (Witmer & Wimer, 2021; Sherratt et al, 2013).

In all of these efforts, we need to focus on retaining teachers of color. This is essential for addressing inequities in our systems and the needs for more culturally responsive and relevant practices.

While making strides to address the challenges the teaching profession faces takes significant effort, we see the initial steps are proceeding through promising programs and practices in states and districts across the country. News reports may never tell the full story of the success and innovation found within our classrooms, school buildings, and state houses. But the work of elevating the profession is underway now and will continue to shape our profession and the quality of our education system for years to come. Let's recognize and champion our success by leaning into more comprehensive approaches that look to the future while also developing, supporting, and retaining the teachers in our classrooms today.

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Principal turnover is too high. Principal supervisors can help

BY AMIE B. CIEMINSKI AND ANTHONY ASMUS

While there has been national attention to the crisis of retaining teachers, principal turnover is also high. The average turnover rate for principals is 18% — a number that, while troubling on its own, obscures the more concerning facts that 35% of principals have been at their schools for less than two years and principal turnover is higher in schools with high poverty rates (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Principal turnover can disrupt school improvement efforts, staff climate, morale, teacher retention, and student achievement.

In a review of research, Levin and Bradley (2019) summarized five mechanisms for improving principal retention that focus on professional

culture, support, and learning. These strategies provide an important starting place for changing the turnover trend, but implementing them requires a clear understanding of who needs to be involved and how. According to our experience and research studies, principal supervisors are essential for implementing these strategies, increasing the retention of principals, and improving teaching and learning.

Principal supervisors are often overlooked in conversations about improving schools, but their importance has gained attention from the principal pipeline work of The Wallace Foundation and the advent of Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards produced by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015). This work has shifted the job description for principal supervisors from compliance officers and evaluators to instructional leaders who lead with principals and facilitate learning and support for the sake of improvement in teaching and learning.

Principal supervisors hold various titles and work portfolios, depending on the structure and size of a school district, including director of school leadership, assistant superintendent of schools, human resources director, and even superintendent. What defines their role as a principal supervisor is that they are focused on working collaboratively with principals to grow in their roles as excellent instructional leaders.

We (co-authors of this article) have both supervised principals in the Greeley-Evans School District 6 in Colorado. We spoke to five colleagues across Colorado to glean key actions that principal supervisors say contribute to improving principals' job satisfaction and, in turn, the retention of the principals. From these conversations and experiences, we unpack what the recommendations from Levin and Bradley (2019) mean for principal supervisors and provide specific examples that other district leaders might adopt to stop the principal churn.

MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN PRINCIPALS

According to Levin and Bradley's (2019) research review, the key mechanisms for improving principal retention are:

- Improve principals' working conditions;
- Increase their decision-making autonomy;
- Ensure sufficient compensation;
- Decrease counterproductive accountability practices; and
- Provide meaningful and high-quality professional learning.

Ongoing learning and support that is consistent with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2022) is embedded in each of these.

All of these mechanisms were reflected in our conversations with school leaders. In some cases, we have expanded on these mechanisms to add related conditions and practices that leaders shared with us as key to strengthening the profession.

Improve principals' working conditions.

One of the most important aspects of improving working conditions is ensuring employees know that someone cares about them at work and encourages their growth and development. In contrast to managing as a "higher-up" in a downtown office focused on compliance, principal supervisors should start by establishing positive working relationships. These relationships include getting to know the principal, staff, and communities through frequent site visits. Going to the school rather than expecting principals to come to the supervisor's office is a small step to minimize the hierarchical nature of supervision and strengthen the principal-supervisor relationship.

Effective supervisors begin each school visit with a personal check-in and time of authentic recognition. These recognitions might include outstanding work with the parent community, increased student growth scores on a local assessment or student attendance, or improved school culture. Sherry Kalbach, area superintendent in District 11 in Colorado Springs, focuses on celebrating easy and small wins with her principals, who may be focused on big improvements like state assessment scores and do not recognize all the good work they are accomplishing.

Kirk Vsetecka, an assistant superintendent in Widefield, believes that a positive working relationship starts with clear expectations and communication and then letting the

principals be themselves. Dina Perfetti-Deany has supervised principals in St. Vrain Valley School District for six years. She establishes relationships by explaining her expectations and approach, including setting goals in collaboration with each principal that focus on instructional leadership and professional growth. She intentionally spends time listening more to her principals than talking at them.

School district leaders create collaborative structures to foster relationships among the principals they supervise. These structures might be learning communities based on level (e.g., elementary and secondary), learning topic, or feeder area. Having a supportive network of principal colleagues and mentors helps with the isolation that some principals experience and provides an additional source of learning and knowledge.

Kalbach believes principal retention is a combination of relationship and support. She starts by understanding what drives the principal, personally and professionally, and builds from there. "Principals need to know the supervisor has their back and can get them the resources they need to be successful in a timely manner," she said.

Availability and accessibility to resources can stop principal frustration and increase job satisfaction. Principal supervisors should make themselves and other district office leaders available for support, guidance, and training. Like other supervisors we spoke with, Paul Jebe, from District 51 in Grand Junction, takes a 24/7 stance for communication with his principals so they can receive the support they need immediately. He says he ensures that school leaders get the timely support they need and elicits feedback from them when the district is not getting it right.

Increase decision-making autonomy.

Principal supervisors have often served as principals themselves. They understand the job's complexity but may not have experienced the particular issue their principals are facing. Principal supervisors can support decision-making authority and allow principals to be authentic while shaping solutions that address the specific needs of their staff and students.

Paul Jebe, from District 51 in Grand Junction, takes a 24/7 stance for communication with his principals so they can receive the support they need immediately. He says he ensures that school leaders get the timely support they need and elicits feedback from them when the district is not getting it right.

Perfetti-Deany was a principal for 11 years before joining the district administration team. She noted that the principalship continues to change, and she has not experienced all the challenges that principals face today with the evolution of technology and the COVID-19 pandemic. She focuses on building the principals' toolboxes of strategies. Likewise, Vsetecka said that many of his visits and phone calls with principals are strategy sessions. Jebe aligns his support with principal actions and decision-making. Jebe dedicates two or three days per week to coaching his principals using the leadership framework created by district directors to ensure principals have what they need to succeed. Rather than providing solutions, supervisors need to help principals think about possible consequences and strategies to roll out decisions that work for their school community, which builds mastery of sound decision-making.

Both Vsetecka and Jennifer Perry, deputy superintendent in Cherry Creek Schools, emphasize that they want principals to be their own type of leaders and not feel that they need to follow in their supervisor's footsteps. This approach goes a long way in promoting autonomy for principals.

Autonomy does not mean leaving principals to believe that they are on their own island or that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Vsetecka said he worried that what leaders in other school districts frame as independence may translate into lack of support and being afraid to call for help. Instead, effective principal supervisors encourage their principals to ask for support rather than go it alone and get themselves stuck.

Perry stressed that, in Cherry Creek Schools, supporting (not directing) principals is the job of the entire district office staff. For example, she sends finance specialists to the schools to help with budgets or special education experts for topics about students with disabilities. Getting principals the information they need from various district office leaders can support principals' decision-making capabilities. This approach frees principal supervisors to focus on decisions about teaching and learning rather than spend their time on operational and managerial issues (Honig & Rainey, 2020).

Ensure sufficient compensation and manageable workloads.

Levin and Bradley's category about sufficient compensation is important, of course, but competitive salaries and benefits alone do not translate to retention among school leaders. Kalbach said, "Money is nice, but it's not what keeps principals in their seats," citing the full support from various departments and relationships with colleagues and supervisors as more important factors. While principal supervisors may not be able to directly influence monetary compensation for the principals they supervise, they can ensure that principals feel valued for their work.

District leaders need to monitor the workload of building leaders. They can reduce the number of requirements, calendared workdays, or new initiatives. Principal supervisors recognize what

is on their principals' plates. Principal supervisors serve as bridges when they help other district leaders understand the demands on building leaders. They serve as buffers when they adjust timelines and allow flexibility for schools to implement new requirements or initiatives.

They also serve as buffers when they protect principals' professional learning time by keeping principal meetings focused on leadership, instruction, and assessment and requesting that other leaders send information in writing to principals through a weekly streamlined email communication.

Decrease counterproductive accountability practices.

Being a principal can be daunting, and high-stakes accountability measures can be counterproductive to retaining principals. Principal supervisors should provide real-time support and invest in their principals' success rather than punish them. The principal supervisors interviewed said that support starts with district guidelines and systems around policy, instructional frameworks, or communication. For example, Widefield has a teaching and learning cycle that provides a common vision, vocabulary, and expectations for quality instruction that principals have found helpful.

Principal supervisors should spend most of their time collaborating, mentoring, or coaching rather than calibrating or evaluating (Lipton & Wellman, 2013). While effective supervisors value the evaluation process, they focus on goal setting, formative feedback, modeling, and coaching. Coaching involves asking reflective questions to help principals grow in capacity. Classroom walk-throughs are an important tool that principal supervisors use for coaching principals. Supervisors use modeling as another coaching tool rather than telling principals how to do their jobs.

Rather than increase sanctions and harsh requirements for low-performing schools, supervisors can increase their support in these situations. Perfetti-Deany says she doubles down on the support to bolster the necessary skills for the challenges. This keeps principals on the team rather than leading to principal attrition. Likewise, Anthony Asmus from Greeley-Evans School District 6 increases the number of school support visits to principals in lower-performing schools. He sits side-by-side with the principals as they coach teachers on instructional improvement. He co-facilitates professional learning and helps principals create agendas for their building leadership teams.

Provide timely and relevant professional learning.

Principal supervisors' critical tasks for nurturing the professional growth of principals include matching resources for principals' specific needs and facilitating professional learning for their principals. Principal supervisors use student outcome data and staff implementation data to shape learning opportunities for their leaders. They also connect principals with high-leverage external learning opportunities and then provide ongoing support for the implementation of new learning.

Principal supervisors often work with other district leaders to provide professional learning aligned with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning on essential topics that all principals need, such as leading for more equitable student outcomes, interpreting the assessment results for diverse learners, or improving teacher effectiveness. Instructional leadership is one of these high-priority topics. Like many effective principal supervisors, Asmus leads professional learning sessions every other week that are aligned to building and district goals to improve principals' overall knowledge of equitable instructional practices.

After he creates a yearly plan focused on the annual goals, he facilitates learning for building leaders in observation and feedback, data meetings, and culture. Focusing on a few high-leverage instructional leadership skills empowers building leaders, creates efficacy, and decreases stress and burnout by giving principals the strategies they need to be successful in their job every day.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION ABOUT PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS

- **Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards:** bit.ly/3Y4jcy9
- **Wallace Foundation Principal Supervisor Resources:** bit.ly/3DkDmvU
- **AASA National Principal Supervisor Academy:** bit.ly/407Gc0K

PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION PLANS

While principal supervisors are key players in supporting principals' growth, principal retention efforts are more successful when there are districtwide succession plans or transparent systems for recruiting and developing aspiring principals and assistant principals. Creating a system to attract new leaders within the district and support the growth and readiness of current assistant principals limits the negative effects created by principal turnover.

Although Perry realizes that not all districts have the same capacity, she believes that a focus on grow-your-own is a key to having strong leaders at all levels within the organization. Her district provides mentoring and job-alike learning groups for assistant principals and deans to help them grow their leadership capacity. Other strategies to boost leader satisfaction, development, and retention include partnering with local principal preparation programs, reorganizing roles and responsibilities for the

administrators in charge of principal supervision, redesigning mentoring and induction for leaders, and revamping professional learning for all leaders (Cieminski, 2022).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Principals make a difference in student outcomes, and principal turnover is detrimental. Principal supervisors can be a help or hindrance in retaining principals based on how well they support principals' development, skills, and ability to navigate challenges.

Principal supervisors who tell principals how to run their schools, dangle their evaluative power over them, or manage by edict not only miss important opportunities to improve school culture and practice, they may also be contributing to principal turnover.

In contrast, principal supervisors who follow the practices described in this article are building the foundation for stronger schools while also making schools better places to work and lead. Their potential impact on principal retention is not the only benefit of a supportive, learning-focused approach, but it's an important start.

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How districts and states are addressing teacher turnover

Continued from p. 33

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When it comes to professional learning, one size does NOT fit all

Are you tired of professional learning initiatives that feel like they were designed for someone else? Or professional learning that feels compliance-driven rather than meaningful?

Do you crave learning opportunities that are designed and facilitated to be relevant and adaptable to your needs and the needs of the students you serve? Every student is unique, every educator faces unique challenges, and every campus and district serves a diverse community.

Sometimes, professional learning can feel like that's been forgotten.

In today's learning environment, given the wonderful diversity and the sometimes overwhelming challenges we face as educators, professional learning can feel like it's either the key to success or a drain on our valuable time.

Make sure that the professional learning you are offering your educators is designed and crafted to fit their needs. Learning Forward has spent more than 50 years learning, listening, and working with districts to craft customized professional learning solutions that will have educators feeling seen, valued, understood, and supported in their efforts to meet students' needs.

Call us to see how we can help you.

For more information, contact Sharron Helmke, vice president, professional services, sharron.helmke@learningforward.org.

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A 'ONE, SOME, ALL' approach wraps educators in layers of support

BY MAGDALENA GANIAS

In the face of staff shortages and teacher turnover, Worcester (Massachusetts) Public Schools is supporting multiple avenues to recruit and retain quality educators in our district. High-quality professional learning is one of those avenues for ensuring we have a strong and stable workforce.

The district's Office of Curriculum and Professional Learning believes that systematic, purposeful, and structured high-quality professional learning is not only vital to teacher practice and student outcomes, but also a critical component of retaining staff. Put simply, we believe that if educators feel supported, they will stay committed to students and the field.

The phrase "high-quality" is key because a one-time workshop or occasional feedback session will not lead to the kind of relationships, skills, and commitment that are essential for teachers to stay in the profession and thrive for the long term. Our professional learning is a multitiered,

sustained system that is grounded in best practices in and conditions for high-quality professional learning.

This structure ensures quality so that professional learning is a foundation of the safety net that helps staff persevere, experience daily wins, build confidence, feel successful, and see the results of their efforts. With this support, they can push past barriers we are all facing in schools today so high-quality teaching and learning can happen.

MULTITIERED SUPPORT FOR ONE, SOME, ALL

Every day, our professional learning team, which includes specialists from each of the major curriculum content areas, offers professional learning at both the district and school levels, tailored to content areas and grade levels. The team recognizes that we are all learners, adults included, so we create multiple entry points to support all staff.

To do this, we use a "one, some, all" model in which we offer learning opportunities that are targeted and individualized for adult learners' specific needs.

- **One** refers to individualized support, such as a coach helping a teacher with lesson planning or modeling a lesson.
- **Some** refers to focused support for small groups, such as professional learning communities (PLCs), grade-level team meetings, or learning walks.
- **All** refers to whole-school or districtwide support, such as support for introducing and implementing a new curriculum, routine, or initiative.

This support includes weekly content-based professional learning sessions, content-focused PLCs, classroom walk-throughs, learning walks, and lesson modeling. Teachers in our district are often in a professional learning session on Monday, bringing content-specific practices back to their classrooms on Tuesday, and following up with our team on Wednesday to share and receive feedback that includes artifacts such as pictures of students implementing the classroom activities covered in professional learning.

One of the main ways we translate the "one, some, all" model to the school level is through coaching. Coaches identify the appropriate level of support and plan and facilitate accordingly. In Worcester Public Schools, coaches are widely considered the most effective building-based support available to teachers, and they have a profound impact on teachers' growth and development.

A core value of our team is listening to learner voice. With the goal of connecting by listening, our team shares a midyear survey to collect feedback from all staff in the district. We review the data to plan and facilitate professional learning experiences that are responsive to the needs and the targeted goals of schools. Teacher voice and engagement in the learning process fosters connection and provides a sense of investment in planning learning opportunities. It also helps us provide the support they need to be successful and stay in the profession for the long term.

MODEL CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Across all of these levels, we apply and model the conditions for effective teaching and learning. Aware that the principles of effective teaching and learning are similar for students and adults, we intentionally model these conditions and highlight our metacognitive planning process so that adult learners may recognize the practices and strategies and emulate them with their students. These conditions and practices are detailed in the table on p. 42.

We also know that professional learning must meet an additional set of criteria to be high-quality and lead to positive outcomes for teachers and students. Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning offer us a structure for designing and ensuring effective professional learning at all levels — for teachers, coaches, and professional learning staff. The standards frame the essentials of adult learning to impact student outcomes, and we use them to guide our work.

The following examples illustrate how specific standards shape our work and therefore coaches' and teachers' career development. It's important to note, however, that the standards work together to provide a coherent vision of professional learning and these standards are implemented in connection with the others.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators apply standards and research to their work, develop the expertise essential to their roles, and prioritize coherence and alignment in their learning.

- We prioritize professional learning based on district and school-based goals and the specific areas of expertise that staff need to develop.
- We support coaches to develop their coaching lens, which is a distinct body of knowledge and skills for which coaches need support.

CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING	
Goal-driven	• Clarifies content and practice standards to drive learning. • Outlines targeted focus of the session(s). • Refines the focus of the workshop for the presenter. • Clarifies expectations for participants. • Determines level of session: awareness, skill building, design, leadership.
Learner-centered	• Uses and models effective facilitation methods and techniques for learner engagement. • Considers barriers of the learners in planning. • Values the input and experience of diverse learners.
Action-oriented	• Actively includes participants in their learning. • Uses I do, we do, you do. • Provides multiple ways to achieve and show mastery.
Product-creating	• Builds participants' skills and knowledge for application. • Offers a variety of materials and resources for additional study. • Connects evidence back to the goal so participants can show their learning.
Implementation-focused	• Sets implementation goals: tomorrow, in seven days, in 30 days. • Encourages participants to share learning with a peer.

CULTURE OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.

- We work in professional learning communities because we know that ongoing collaboration and shared reflection build more capacity more effectively.
- We recognize we are all responsible for improving learning for all learners, including our district's multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
- We engage educators in cycles of continuous improvement that are embedded in collaborative structures and practices.

LEADERSHIP

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning, sustain coherent support to build educator capacity, and advocate for professional learning by sharing the importance and evidence of impact of professional learning.

- We shape and maintain a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning at the district level.
- We structure authentic communities for staff, including leaders, to learn, share, and build educator capacity.
- We offer coherent and consistent district support to coaches and staff.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators prioritize high-quality curriculum and instructional materials for students, assess student learning, and understand curriculum and implement through instruction.

- We employ transparent processes for choosing high-quality materials.
- We identify consistent and coherent practices for teaching and learning.
- We continuously communicate Multi-Tiered System of Supports structures and practices for all learners.

LEARNING DESIGNS

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators set relevant and contextualized learning goals, ground their work in research and theories about learning, and implement evidence-based learning designs.

- We set relevant and contextualized learning goals based on context, including schools' goals and content and practice standards.
- We focus on valuing the lived experience of diverse learners and using culturally responsive and appropriate materials.
- We plan for and anticipate barriers to learning through our focus on Universal Design for Learning.

SUPPORTING COACHES

Coaches are essential for implementing these high-quality professional learning practices. But we know that coaches are at risk of burnout and attrition, just like the teachers they are supporting. Transitioning from the role of teacher to coach comes with a unique set of challenges that new coaches are not always prepared for.

In addition, the current context of high teacher and student stress, as well as high levels of teacher turnover and absences, means that coaches are supporting instructional and emotional needs while balancing a sense of urgency to foster academic growth in the wake of pandemic disruptions. Supporting them is therefore an important part of the work of our department.

We offer coaches two authentic learning communities to build professional ties and collaborate with a community of colleagues. The relationships built in these professional learning communities reduce feelings of isolation and increase coaches' retention.

The PLCs for new coaches, which are facilitated by the consulting group Focused Schools, focus on coaching practices, models, and conversations New coaches meet monthly to learn and practice coaching protocols and then build practices to ensure transfer of learning that impacts teacher instruction and student learning. For example, they learn about the teaching and learning cycle we use in the district, which includes:

- Planning (from standards or goals);
- Teaching with consideration of all learners and barriers;
- Assessing (assessments vary by context);
- Analyzing learner evidence;
- Adapting as needed; and
- Reflecting on the process.

The Office of Curriculum and Professional Learning also guides coaches to use scripting to guide reflection. Scripting, a very simple way to document a lesson, calls for noting three types of information in every observation: time, what the teacher is doing, and what the students are doing. Documenting this information allows coaches to jot down what they have observed without any judgment or opinion.

Following the observation, the coach and teacher can review the script and discuss what the coach observed. The coach's role is to ask probing questions. The questions allow the teacher to lead the learning process rather than the coach dictating what comes next. The lens of the school growth plan and district goals are a factor, but teachers are driving the shifts and leaning on the coach for support. A shift that is teacher-led has more meaning and impact than a shift that is imposed, and a shift that is teacher-led will be implemented over time.

The other PLC focuses on Universal Design for Learning. Universal Design for Learning is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people and is based on the recognition that there is variability in the way people learn and demonstrate their learning (CAST, 2018).

The PLC works to deepen coaches' understanding of the Universal Design for Learning guidelines from CAST, the organization that developed the framework. The guidelines provide concrete suggestions and practices to help educators ensure that all learners have flexible ways to access and engage in learning opportunities.

Over the course of a year, the Universal Design for Learning PLC builds a support team of colleagues who learn and apply the guidelines to their coaching practice. This inquiry-based community shifts thinking and practice in a safe space while gaining confidence to apply learning through a coaching lens. Topics include the why of Universal Design for Learning, learning barriers, expert learning, and variability. Participants meet monthly to connect and have pre- and post- tasks to deepen their learning. A library of resources and materials is available for coaches to incorporate as needed.

Through these collaborative experiences, coaches feel connected and gain a sense of belonging. Staff who feel connected to their professional and academic communities overwhelmingly remain in the profession. They can then, in turn, support teachers to feel connected, supported, and engaged so that they, too, stay in the profession.

CONFIDENT AND INVESTED

We believe that educators are more likely to develop confidence and feel invested in and committed to their profession, their colleagues, their students, and their schools when they feel a sense of belonging and care and when their feedback is used to craft needs-specific support to address their current challenges. In this way, our office's investment in all educators' learning, development, and growth can improve retention at all levels of the system.

As our team strives to meet our mission of supporting all learners — adults and students — and looks for avenues to continue our learning, we are eager to connect with other learning professionals about how they design and implement professional learning and navigate current challenges. We encourage you to reach out to us and share your professional learning practices and supports for retaining staff.

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REACH. INVESTIGATE. DISCOVER.

IDEAS

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

"Time for reflecting, sharing ideas, and connecting with others matters for teacher engagement," write Jill Neumayer DePiper, Angela Knotts, and Nanette Seago in their article, "How to translate professional learning to virtual settings." This set of Ideas articles highlights how collaborative professional learning for math, equity, and leadership makes a difference.

How to translate professional learning to virtual settings

BY JILL NEUMAYER DePIPER, ANGELA KNOTTS, AND NANETTE SEAGO

When the COVID-19 pandemic moved teaching and learning to remote and virtual spaces, teacher professional learning moved online as well. Educators discovered that online asynchronous professional learning offers some benefits that may be worth keeping for the long-term: Teachers and leaders have more control of their professional learning schedules, flexibility to balance competing priorities, and fewer logistical constraints.

And research studies comparing online and traditional face-to-face offerings are encouraging: In some settings, online professional learning has been found to improve teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy (An, 2018) and lead to high satisfaction and relatively high levels of information sharing (Yoon et al., 2020).

We have learned that we can effectively embed evidence-based elements of in-person professional learning into an online asynchronous program. This allows districts and schools to personalize the professional learning to their educators' specific needs without the logistical barriers of scheduling and transportation.

Online professional learning also has drawbacks, however. Participating educators sometimes feel isolated, stuck behind a computer screen without the rich social interactions of face-to-face experiences, and some find that their online opportunities are not engaging or lack meaningful connection to their teaching practice. That's because simply copying successful face-to-face professional learning materials into an asynchronous setting may not result in an engaging and quality experience.

To create consistently high-quality teacher learning opportunities, many online asynchronous approaches need improvement, and they need to be tailor-made for the online setting. That was our goal when we began designing and implementing Video in the Middle, an online professional learning program for middle and high school math teachers. We have learned that we can effectively embed evidence-based elements of in-person professional learning — such as the use of classroom artifacts, facilitation structures, and opportunities for teacher interaction — into an online asynchronous program. This allows districts and schools to personalize the professional learning to their educators' specific needs without the logistical barriers of scheduling and transportation.

THE VIDEO IN THE MIDDLE PROJECT

The Video in the Middle project is a series of two-hour learning modules, delivered asynchronously and designed to expand teachers' knowledge and practice related to the critical middle and high school mathematics concepts of linear functions and similarity (Seago et al., 2018). While each module can stand alone and provide an individual teacher with focused learning on a single topic, together, the 40 Video in the Middle modules offer district leaders and other facilitators the opportunity to assemble a sequence of modules that meets specific teacher learning needs.

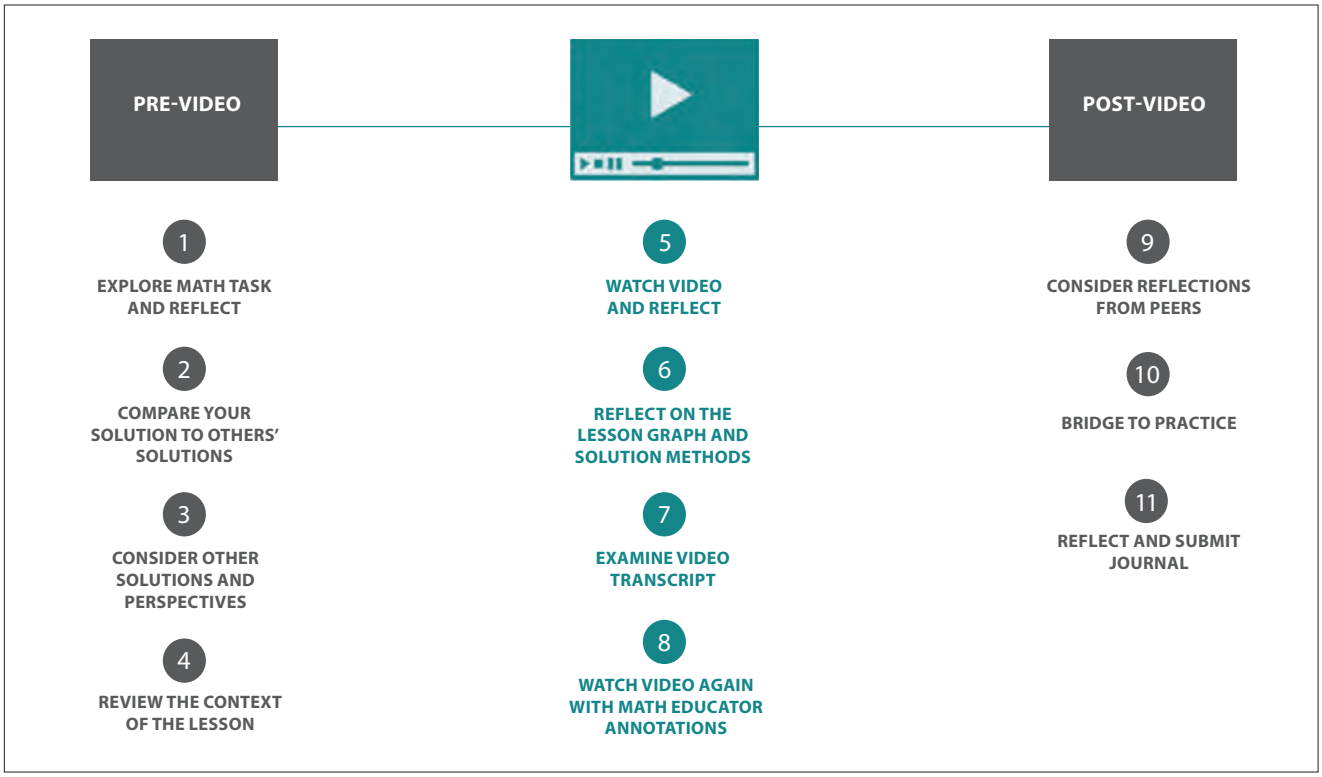
Each module has the same format of activities, where a video of classroom instruction is sandwiched between other learning activities, discussion boards, and reflections (see the figure on p. 48). At the beginning of the module, teachers explore the mathematics task that will be part of student and teacher instruction in the video clip. The tasks promote reasoning and problem-solving, such as the Growing Dots task in the figure on p. 49.

Teachers complete the task independently, and then post their solutions on a community wall to share asynchronously with other teachers. Additional slides and handouts present a variety of mathematical methods and representations on the task, and teachers then review these both before and after viewing the video clip.

Classroom video is central to the project. The videos in each module present classroom instruction, student thinking, and teacher decision-making. Learning about the mathematics task and the context of the lesson — what students had learned before and the teacher's goals — sets up teachers' engagement with the video clip. Then, by analyzing students' mathematical thinking from video, teachers gain insight into the range of students' mathematical understanding and are better prepared to target instruction more effectively to the concepts, practices, and skills that remain to be learned (Kazemi & Franke, 2004).

In this manner, videos and artifacts of practice, even from another

VIDEO IN THE MIDDLE MODULE STRUCTURE



classroom, spark teacher learning about both content and instruction and elicit reflection on next steps they can take in their own classroom contexts.

Teachers then continue their analysis by annotating the video transcript, noting where they see productive teacher questioning or highlighting of particular student thinking. Annotation of the video is also done asynchronously using an online platform that allows teachers to see and respond to others' ideas in a forum-like environment. The module closes with additional journal prompts and an opportunity for teachers to share a final reflection on an online community wall.

To investigate how the modules support teacher learning, we iteratively tested them with 18 teachers and then recruited an additional 68 teachers to complete the modules and share their learning. Participating teachers completed four modules across eight weeks, completing online posts and journal responses as well as weekly surveys and post-study interviews.

To measure teachers' learning, we analyzed the written responses from 61 teachers who completed all modules for evidence of specific mathematics teaching practices and discussion of how their thinking changed. Analysis of the written reflections of 61 teachers who used the modules in online asynchronous settings suggest teacher learning gains related to the key instructional practices that were the focus of each module. Additional interview and survey results complemented the qualitative and quantitative analyses.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our experiences with developing and studying Video in the Middle modules, we offer four recommendations for others who are interested in designing and implementing high-quality, engaging, online asynchronous professional learning for teachers.

Use content that has worked well for your audience in the past as a guide. In development, we structured each module around activities that facilitated teacher learning in face-to-face sessions and then reformatted them to work in an online environment while maintaining the essential ingredients and interactions. For example, we considered the reflection questions we usually ask teachers during in-person learning, as well as their typical responses, then used that information to detail the activities, questions, and prompts in the online environment.

One example of this is the process we created to help teachers learn from others' work, even though they engage with one another asynchronously. In the face-to-face version of the professional learning, once teachers have completed the task, we typically have them share in small groups or pairs to explore and make sense of

others' solution strategies.

We reimagined this activity for an asynchronous, online setting by asking teachers to post photos of their work on a discussion wall that we called a community wall, prompting teachers to review the solutions posted by others, reflect on questions about others' work (such as, "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"), and post comments in response.

To facilitate further interaction, we encouraged them to check back later for more responses if they were the first to post. In this community space, teachers shared their ideas and engaged in discussion about the mathematics, similar to how we have seen in face-to-face environments.

Use artifacts of classroom practice. Across virtual and face-to-face settings, artifacts of classroom practice such as classroom video and student work can encourage teacher learning and reflection. Artifacts help connect teachers to the instructional context in ways that reading about a classroom or hearing about it from someone else does not.

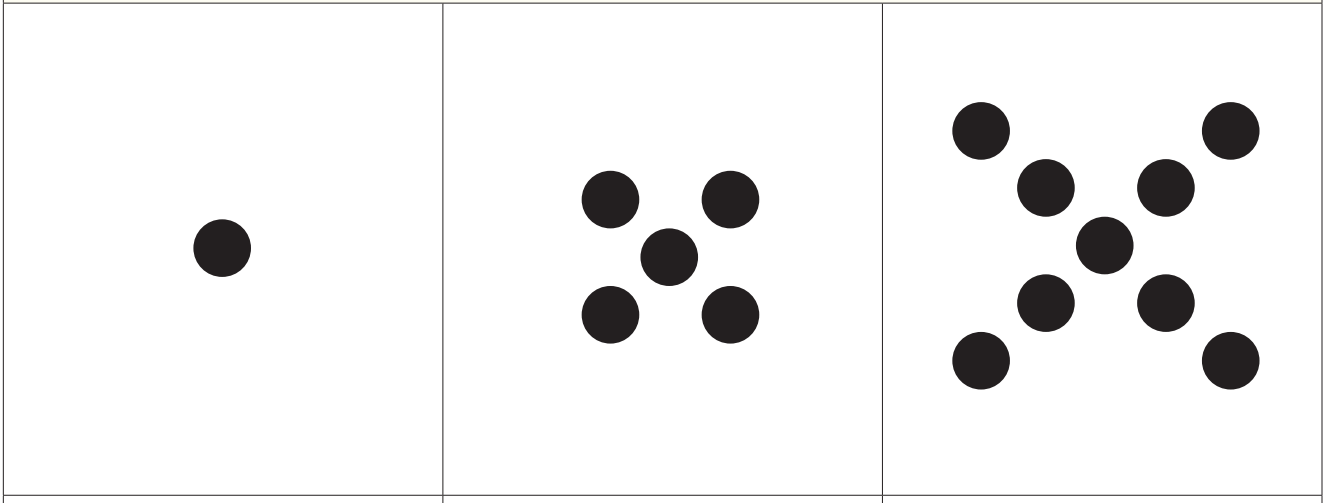
Incorporating video is an especially good way to provide an opportunity for teachers to analyze the relationships among pedagogical decisions and practices, students' thinking, and disciplinary content in ways that improve their instructional practice (Borko et al., 2011). Teachers who participated in the Video in the Middle project found that videos of teacher instruction and student interactions highlighted the complexity of classroom instruction and illustrated the breadth of student solution strategies.

These videos presented opportunities to learn about the mathematics and how to teach it and also fostered rich discussion around the realities of teaching. As video technology and online video sharing have become more accessible and widespread, video-based professional learning is well-positioned to leverage the benefits of digital platforms (Teräs & Kartoglu, 2017).

Embed key facilitation moves into the design. While classroom video and student artifacts offer opportunities for teacher learning, in traditional face-to-face workshops facilitators need to enact particular strategies to promote meaningful teacher discussions and rich learning around videos and classroom artifacts to leverage these artifacts as tools for teacher learning (van Es et al., 2020).

Without facilitator guidance, teacher analysis of video or student work can result in an unproductive sharing of ideas, or worse, lead to an unfair critique of teachers or students. In the Video in the Middle module structure, where teachers complete activities online and asynchronously, we embedded key facilitation moves (van Es et al., 2014) into the prompts, activities, and discussion boards. The prompts and activities as written keep the focus on noteworthy events and student strengths and encourage teachers to make connections

GROWING DOTS



At the beginning	At 1 minute	At 2 minutes

Describe the pattern. Assuming the sequence continues in the same way, how many dots are there at 3 minutes? 100 minutes? t minutes?

Source: © 2023 WestEd.

FACILITATION MOVES IN ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS MODULES	
Category	**Examples of structures and prompts by category and type embedded in Video in the Middle activities**
1. Orient teachers to the video (or classroom artifacts) to prepare for the analysis task.	• Embed questions to elicit teachers' ideas on the task and possible solutions. • Include additional information and resources about the classroom context or mathematics presented in the video.
2. Sustain an inquiry stance.	• Highlight noteworthy student ideas with post-video questions. • Embed questions to prompt teachers to explain their reasoning or elaborate on their ideas. • Provide an interpretation of an event, interaction, or mathematical idea from the video. • Include details of alternative points of view.
3. Maintain a focus on the artifact and the mathematics.	• Embed follow-up questions that focus on the artifact and analysis. • Prompt for evidence to reason about teaching and learning. • Make connections between ideas posted in discussion boards.
4. Support group collaboration.	• Allow teachers time to reflect on their ideas and instruction. • Invite teachers to share their similar and different ideas. • Confirm and support contributions.
Source: Modified from van Es et al., 2014.	

from classroom artifacts to their own teaching, without a facilitator monitoring or participating.

Four categories of key facilitation moves were built into and across the modules (see table above). First, to orient teachers to the video to prepare for the analysis task, each module begins with teachers completing a mathematics task and detailing their solution approach, why it made sense to them, and what they might do to prepare to use this task with students. These activities and prompts elicit teacher ideas in the context of the task, which keeps the focus on the task and the mathematics.

A second key facilitation move is sustaining an inquiry stance through prompts and activities that direct teacher attention to noteworthy student ideas. For example, after watching the video, Video in the Middle activities prompt teachers to attend to classroom interactions and reflect on student ideas and instructional moves.

Subsequent module activities include commentary from mathematicians and other mathematics educators to encourage teachers to consider these ideas and make connections to alternative solution methods or instruction. In this study, teachers responded in both a private journal and online discussion boards that others could review.

Other key activities helped to maintain a focus on the video and the mathematics. In each module, one activity prompts teacher participants to annotate a transcript of the video and respond to questions highlighting mathematical and pedagogical interactions, thereby grounding the analysis of the video in specific evidence. Participants are also prompted to make connections between their ideas and the ideas of other mathematics educators.

To support group collaboration, the modules included discussion boards and spaces for educators to interact with each other and prompts to encourage it. Prompts on the online discussion boards encourage teachers to ask each other questions and discuss their responses. In our study, teachers appreciated seeing others' solutions and frequently made comments such as "I like your method! I struggled to find an alternative method. Thanks for sharing this!" and "This method is similar to mine, but yours is clearer." These comments fostered asynchronous conversation as other group members then chimed in with supportive comments or questions.

Teachers said that seeing others' solution methods encouraged them to use new approaches in their own problem-solving and encouraged them to reflect on their understanding and on their students: "Will students use this method?" and "I think that this method is one that I would show my students first." In this manner, teachers facilitated their own community through their comments and responses to each other.

Encourage teacher reflection and

sharing. Time for reflecting, sharing ideas, and connecting with others matters for teacher engagement and interest, and that is true in virtual spaces as well as in-person ones. In the Video in the Middle modules, online community walls and discussion boards provide a space for teachers to interact with and learn from others and journals provided teachers with a personal writing space.

This independent time is unique to asynchronous online platforms, as many face-to-face professional learning opportunities do not allow enough time for teachers to step back and contemplate ideas at their own pace. Teachers found that this opportunity to pause and reflect independently before engaging with others gave them "space to think and space to share." In this manner, the facilitation of the virtual environment is both in prompting and encouraging discussion as well as creating spaces for teachers to interact with each other and the content.

Prompts also encouraged teachers to make connections from the classroom artifacts to their own practice. For example, one community board prompt asked teachers to use the sentence starters, "Mathematically, I'm thinking …" and "Pedagogically, I'm thinking …" to reflect on their learning about both the mathematics and their teaching.

Responses emphasized teacher learning in these areas and how they connected the mathematics and their instruction: "Mathematically, I'm thinking that there are so many ways to approach this problem that are accurate and creative. Pedagogically, I'm thinking about how I can validate each of these approaches with fidelity without losing too much instructional time."

FLEXIBLE LEARNING WITH IMPACT

For professional learning to lead to changes in instructional practices, we know that teachers need rich experiences that attend to content, classrooms, and community. We also know that flexible ways to access such professional learning are needed as teachers attempt to balance such opportunities with many other responsibilities.

High-quality online professional learning experiences such as Video in the Middle have the potential to provide more teachers with flexible, convenient access to critical learning opportunities that have often been available only to a lucky few. Embedding classroom artifacts, key facilitation moves, and opportunities for teacher reflection and collaboration in the asynchronous module structure not only facilitates teacher learning but also structures an engaging and enjoyable experience.

One teacher captured how the course experience worked for her this way: "I like this particular experience because I can go at my own pace, and it was still almost like it was facilitated because there were questions that you had to answer. We weren't having discussions necessarily, but there was group input."

By incorporating the recommendations above, particularly the facilitation moves in the table on p. 50, teacher leaders and professional learning designers and facilitators can translate successful in-person learning experiences into high-impact online, asynchronous learning experiences. Building these recommendations into professional learning experiences can leverage technology to facilitate ambitious teaching and greater student achievement.

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What does equity require of me?

INQUIRY CYCLE TAKES A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO DISMANTLING INEQUITY

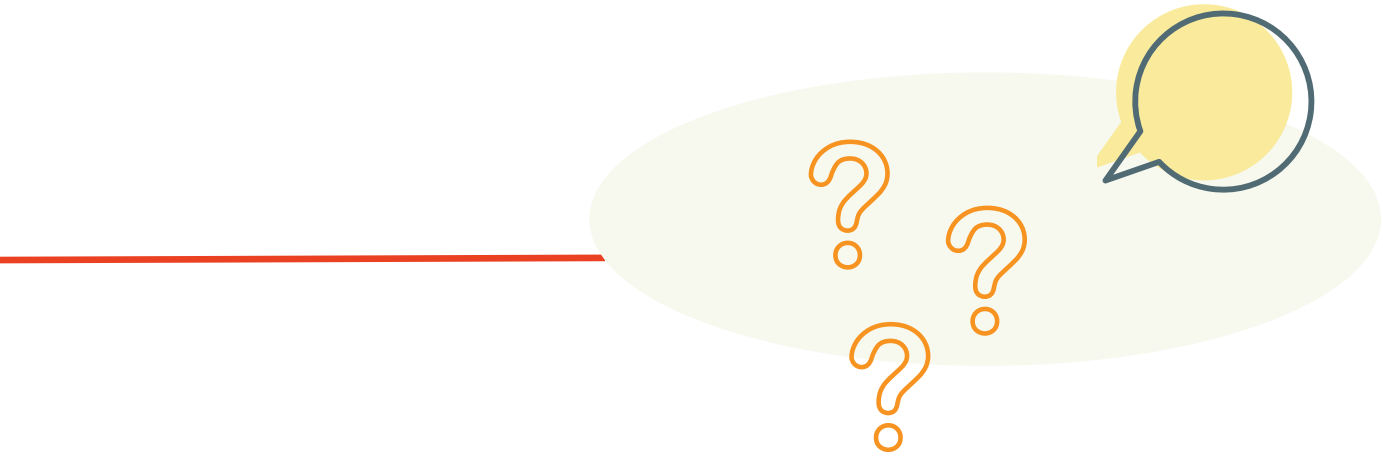
BY TAMMIE CAUSEY-KONATÉ

Multiple pandemics, including COVID-19, systemic racism, and the opioid crisis, and other international emergencies have laid bare longstanding inequities that have made access to a high-quality education out of reach for too many historically marginalized students. Moreover, research reveals that education leaders often perpetuate, even if unintentionally, the very inequities that the public relies on them to dismantle (Khalifa, 2018; Theoharis, 2009; Green, 2016).

We need to reform and reinvent the education systems and practices that we have inherited. To do so, education leaders must commit to enacting a bold vision of *all* — not just some — students thriving. They need opportunities and support to develop and implement that vision.

The "Do the Right Thing" Equity Inquiry Cycle is a systems approach to professional learning designed to help education leaders develop an equitable vision and dismantle educational inequity. It is intensive and designed to be sustained over time to have real and lasting impact on educational systems.

The cycle is grounded in African



epistemology, which is characterized by one's "… ethical obligation (King, 2017; Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2005) to pursue wisdom for enhancing the human condition and not merely for intellectual purposes" (Causey-Konaté, 2018, p. 15).

The inquiry cycle is framed around Spike Lee's film, *Do the Right Thing*, which uses the local, immediate, and historical setting of a diverse but predominantly Black neighborhood as a contextual tapestry that forms a backdrop for the tension, frustration, and illogic of contests for power. The film's power contests, like so many in the world of education, take place at the intersection of race and poverty.

The film's title sends a clear message about how such contests should end — with fairness and justice — and the equity inquiry cycle is designed to send the same message by advancing resolution of a foundational question: What does equity require of me as a humane and just leader in education?

The equity inquiry cycle consists of five parts that are intended to disrupt racialized norms by asking education leaders to address how their biases and assumptions, and subsequent policies and practices, contribute to inequity (Espino, 2018). The iterative nature of the cycle is meant to compel education leaders to engage in the continual appraisal of their personal and professional commitments and investments in supporting educational equity.

The "Do the Right Thing" Equity Inquiry Cycle made its debut at the 2018-19 Southeast Comprehensive Center Equity Summit in Jackson, Mississippi, hosted by American Institutes for Research. This multiday event included educators from six states: Alabama, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. Each state identified an equity champion who would serve as the state's key point of contact for the event and lead for the state's three- to four-person team.

Participants engaged in equity-focused professional learning before and during the summit. Before the summit, they participated in cultural immersion experiences that ranged from the Institute for Educational Leadership's intensive, three-day civil rights learning journey to less intensive Mississippi-based community, museum, and university tours focused on educational equity as a civil right.

During the summit, they explored equity-focused data, tools (such as interactive maps of education assets and vulnerabilities), and strategies as part of an equity audit process. They worked to identify state-specific equity strengths and challenges, evidence-based strategies and initiatives, and indicators of student learning, which were designed to inform states' draft ESSA-related equity accountability commitment plans to be implemented after the summit.

While the equity summit in full has not met since 2018-19, some of the original participating state agencies approached the Southeast Comprehensive Center for guidance and support with planning their own versions of the summit. In response, the center developed an equity summit guide to support state agencies in using the equity inquiry cycle. Here, I describe how the equity inquiry cycle works, how it was implemented during and after the summit, and how this work can push us all forward.

THE EQUITY INQUIRY CYCLE

The equity inquiry cycle consists of five parts:

1. Why do the right thing? The first part of the cycle uses a set of shared, culturally immersive, baseline experiences to inform, awaken

consciousness, inspire reflection, compel accountability, and spur collective commitment to redressing the roots of inequity in local, geographic, and historic contexts.

During the equity inquiry cycle pilot, this took the form of a series of cultural immersion activities held the day before the summit and designed to highlight current inequities' roots in the not-so-distant past. The equity champion from each state participated in a three-day civil rights learning journey set in the Deep South and organized by the Institute for Educational Leadership.

They visited historical sites such as the family home of civil rights leader Medgar Evers; the site of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer murders of three civil right workers; the starting point of the Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965; Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of the 1965 attack and beating of civil rights protestors known as Bloody Sunday; and the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, which had served as the hub for organizing the Montgomery bus boycott events.

All other summit attendees chose from options selected to center them in the historical reality of the civil rights movement: a bus tour of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians community, a tour of the Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, and an historic tour of Jackson State University.

2. How to do the right thing. This stage of the cycle bombards participants with irrefutable evidence of inequity and its detrimental effects, followed by opportunities for individual and collective reflection, brainstorming, and strategizing about how to move forward.

Activities included keynote speakers and plenary sessions led by stakeholders with vastly different perspectives, including educators, an economist, an expert on biliteracy, and education advocates. Participants, in cross-team reflection sessions, reflected on strategies presented and aligned them with state priorities.

3. What is the right thing? Participants examined a repertoire of evidence-based practices, policies, and pedagogies for addressing educational inequity. We offered a variety of breakout sessions and a world café structure, a format for hosting large-group dialogue that incorporates seven design principles: Clarify the context, create hospitable space, explore questions that matter, encourage everyone's contribution, connect diverse perspectives, listen together for patterns and insights, and share collective discoveries.

This part of the cycle also included state team working sessions, during which states reviewed the ESSA plans to determine whether they sufficiently attended to data trends and evidence-based practices previously discussed.

4. Do the right thing. Strategic action planning builds on the previous parts of the cycle, using a state-specific, problem-based inquiry approach in which diverse stakeholders collaborate and commit to specific steps for a more equity-focused system.

Participants engaged in two rounds of concurrent sessions covering evidence-based equity strategies, a community strategy session, two plenaries featuring tools and district examples, and state team planning sessions, during which we worked with state teams to draft actionable equitable system plans.

5. Doing the right thing. This stage of the equity inquiry cycle challenges participants to establish systemwide conditions for refining and implementing their equity action plans and engaging in continuous improvement. Educators participate in ongoing, regularly scheduled, systematic reflection with other education stakeholders on their in-progress plans, clarify areas within those plans that call for further refinement, and participate in problem-solving conversations with other professionals.

The final session of the summit reinforced the equity-focused work that states had begun and set expectations and conditions for continuing the work. Teams received packets of information for continuing their planning processes.

To support the refinement and implementation of state actionable equitable system plans, Southeast Comprehensive Center offered coaches to work with key points of contact for state teams to plan ongoing working sessions. In addition, equity champions who took part in the civil rights learning journey would continue to connect regularly to exchange resources, share state updates, and develop a plan to expose other state representatives to the learning journey, thereby restarting the cycle.

CONTINUING THE WORK

Following the summit, Southeast Comprehensive Center coaches engaged with state teams during regularly scheduled meetings to refine their plans and brainstorm and solidify ideas for implementation. Summit participants attended and served as presenters in a three-part Equity in Action webinar series.

State teams continued their equity efforts: Mississippi, for example, worked to further diversify the educator workforce through a teacher residency program and a performance-based credential program. The Michigan team hosted an event to highlight the perspectives of African American females.

The work of dismantling inequity is ongoing. For Equity Summit participants who wish to continue, or for others who may wish to begin engaging in the equity inquiry cycle, I offer three next steps:

1. Anchor your daily practices in your individual accountability and the urgency of the foundational question: What does equity require of me as a humane and just leader in education?
2. Repeat the first three parts of the equity inquiry cycle. This requires you to continually integrate opportunities for learning,

growth, and equity-centered action for the intentional benefit of all learners, particularly the most underserved.

3. Map and implement actionable solutions that prioritize historically underserved populations of learners and are guided by your individual and collective reflections with equity champions and other equity-minded education stakeholders.

This work can push us forward toward an equity-focused system that engages all stakeholders and is characterized by empowerment, excellence, justice, restoration, and transformation. The actions and structures we create now must be designed and implemented with unflinching dedication and first responder-like urgency. The need for a system of equity-focused education that drives the "Do the Right Thing" Equity Inquiry Cycle also implores your present and continuing allyship in creating and sustaining such a system for our youth.

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Learning-oriented leadership cultivates teacher leaders

BY ELLIE DRAGO-SEVERSON AND CHRISTY JOSWICK-O'CONNOR

In our work with school leaders, practitioners frequently tell us that leading schools while navigating the complexities of current times is too difficult for a principal to do alone. Collaboration has always been important, but even more so now, with all the stresses and unknowns we are facing. In this context, shared leadership is essential.

While scholars have suggested many models of shared leadership among principals and teachers (Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Diem et al., 2022; Young et al., 2022), less is known about how to translate models of shared leadership into practice and build teachers' leadership capacity in schools (Campbell et al., 2022; Young et al., 2022).

To meet that need, we created a developmental approach we call learning-oriented leadership that principals and district leaders can use to cultivate teacher leadership in their schools and districts (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012, 2016).

Learning-oriented leadership is a research-based model of leadership and professional development that posits

that leadership is about developing people. Put simply, it focuses on collaborative learning so that educators can support and challenge each other to grow.

The model leverages four distinct yet interrelated practices for growing internal capacity: teaming, inviting colleagues into leadership roles (to share and lift leadership), engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring/developmental coaching. Our research shows that engaging in these intentional processes helps shift school cultures so that educators and schools are equipped to manage today's challenges (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Joswick-O'Connor, 2020.)

DEVELOP LEADERSHIP WITH INTENTIONALITY

One of the ways this model is distinct from others, such as distributed leadership (Spillane, 2012), is that we focus on ensuring leadership roles take into account the developmental fit between teacher and role. Rather than being assigned leadership tasks, school leaders and other administrators invite teachers to lead in a way that considers their specific strengths and growing edges.

Teachers also experience support as they assume leadership responsibility so that they can better manage the complexity of the new role. This provides a safe and secure space with an intentional balance of support and challenge so that educators can stretch, take risks, and grow their internal capacities (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 12).

In our work with administrators and teacher leaders over the past decade, we have supported practices and conditions that encourage such leadership development, especially for informal teacher leadership. Unlike formal leaders — teachers who receive compensation for a titled role such as a dean or department chair — informal leaders maintain classroom teaching responsibilities and assume additional voluntary leadership roles, such as offering advice to new teachers or serving on committee.

In our experience, we have found three components to be particularly important for informal leadership: offering choice, securing resources, and showing up and modeling (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012, 2016; Joswick-O'Connor, 2020). Here we share practical strategies administrators can use to cultivate these components and help teachers grow so that they can assume greater leadership beyond the classroom.

Offering choice. Leadership cannot be mandated. It has to be a choice, and not every educator wants to assume leadership responsibility. We have found that it is important to ask teachers if they want to lead and what they want to lead. Some prompts include:

- "Would you like to help with …"
- "When I'm in your classroom, I noticed that you are really strong with …. Will you help share what you're doing?"
- "What are you particularly passionate about? Would you like to share that with our team?"
- "I'll help you spread this great practice."

Securing resources. For teachers to assume leadership, they often need resources. Resources could include books to lead a book study or an opportunity to attend off-site professional learning and bring back what they have learned. The most valuable resource is time. Many teachers are willing to help but need the time and space to be able to do so.

That might require the school leader to hire a half-day substitute to cover a teacher leader's classroom so that they can have time to plan, meet with other teachers, or look at data. To ensure that teacher leaders have the resources they need, ask them, "What do you need to be successful in this role?"

Showing up and modeling. When school and district leaders show up to participate, model, and help, they show their belief that what the teacher leader is doing matters. Whether it is participating in a book study meeting, modeling a lesson at the teacher leader's request, or being fully present and engaged when a teacher leader is facilitating a faculty meeting, being there and encouraging other administrators to show up can help the teacher leader feel supported and recognized. Afterward, it's important to celebrate their leadership and the risk they took and let them know the difference they made for the school community.

BE CREATIVE AND INCLUSIVE

Here are some examples of informal leadership roles administrators may offer to teachers under our developmental framework. For each of these roles, we recommend first considering the right fit for the teacher, then nurturing the conditions described above (offering choice, providing resources, and showing up and modeling).

Invite teachers to join committees. Schools are filled with committees: curriculum committees, parent-teacher committees, school climate committees, etc. Invite teachers to share their expertise and join committees. In our experience, we have found that parents love to hear from the teachers; curriculum and other school-based decisions benefit from the inclusion of teachers' voices.

Open classrooms. While administrators have the opportunity to visit multiple classrooms, teachers are often only in their own classrooms. Celebrate exceptional teaching that is moving students forward and open classrooms for visitations and learning. Ask teachers if they would be willing to share what they are doing. This could include:

1. Inviting other teachers to watch a lesson;
2. Creating a learning lab by arranging sub coverage so teachers can observe and celebrate great teaching and turn to each other for learning; and
3. Inviting teachers to share their practices in a faculty meeting, professional learning community meeting, or other professional development session.

Host parent information nights. We know it makes a world of difference when parents partner with educators. Invite teachers to share ways parents can work with their children at home. We have seen teachers lead workshops on social and emotional learning, reading, writing, and math strategies to let parents know what is happening inside the classroom and help them understand how to extend that work at home.

STEPPING FORWARD

The saying "many hands make light work" rings true today. We have found that when school and district-based administrators use a developmental lens and commit to offering choice, securing resources, and showing up and modeling how to follow their leadership, teachers are empowered to share leadership — and their role makes a significant difference (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Joswick-O'Connor, 2020).

Empowered teacher leaders not only help administrators but they also increase student achievement (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Louis et al., 2010) and raise efficacy for teachers themselves (Campbell et al., 2022; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Building capacity by focusing on teacher leaders and supporting their development is an important part of the solution for managing the challenges facing education today.

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DISCUSS. COLLABORATE. FACILITATE.

TOOLS

A WINDOW INTO STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION

Case vignettes offer a glimpse into what it looks like when educators implement Standards for Professional Learning and how they overcome common challenges. What follows is the first in a series of standards-focused vignettes.

Learn more about the standards and view additional tools at **standards.learningforward.org**

What do Standards for Professional Learning look like in practice?

BY LEARNING FORWARD

In our ongoing efforts to illustrate how Standards for Professional Learning can be implemented in diverse settings, Learning Forward created the following case vignette of a fictional district. This district, like most, faces many challenges, including the theme of this issue of *The Learning Professional* — supporting educators' professional paths over time so that they and their students are successful in both the short and long term.

The purposes of this vignette are:

- To envision what professional learning informed by Standards for Professional Learning looks like in a real-world setting; and
- To consider how standards-based professional learning can address essential school and district challenges.

The vignette shows how Standards for Professional Learning can support schools, districts, and provinces in addressing their student and adult learning priorities through the story of a teacher who grows into the principalship and helps his district cultivate an equity lens. The narrative depicts how implementing the standards is a journey, rather than an overnight transformation or a checklist to be completed.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE:

1. Read the following vignette, using the prompts that follow to track notes, insights, and questions for subsequent conversations.
2. Note or highlight where you see direct or indirect evidence of Standards for Professional Learning throughout the narrative. While themes from the Equity Foundations, Professional Expertise, and Leadership standards are prominent, aspects of most standards are present in some way.
3. Use the notes and insights to inform a team discussion or individual reflection to lead to deeper understanding and shared actions.

THE STANDARDS AT WORK: ON THE PATH TO EQUITY-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

Terrell Baxter loved being a middle school language arts teacher at Burbank Middle School. The school was in a large urban district that included a roughly equal split between Black and white students, and Burbank had a higher Black student population than other middle schools in the district. Even in the tough days of his first couple of years, Baxter enjoyed working with students. He excelled at relationship building and engaging students who sometimes struggled in other classes.

Baxter benefited from a circle of supportive colleagues, meeting with them frequently in the middle school English language arts professional learning community. He appreciated the support of one informal mentor in particular — Katrina Wyler, the only other Black educator in the building. Wyler split her time between teaching and serving as a literacy coach. She had been instrumental in pushing for Baxter to be hired full time after his stint as a student teacher and continued to support him as he grew into his position and became a valued member of the teaching staff.

Baxter and Wyler shared the goal of increasing the staff's racial diversity — a goal that Wyler also discussed frequently with assistant principal Scott Diamond, with whom she served on the school leadership team. Their leadership work had a heavy emphasis on the district's strategic goal to ensure every student had access to high-quality teaching. Through frequent conversations, Wyler helped Diamond, who was white, understand how important it is for Black students to have Black educators, as well as the benefits to white students and the school as a whole.

Diamond became a strong advocate to further diversify the school's staff and asked Wyler to join him in conversations with central office staff for support in this effort. Their collaboration struck a chord with a district assistant superintendent for talent development who had concerns about the district's recruitment practices and retention rate for Black educators.

GROWING INTO LEADERSHIP

As Baxter became more experienced, he gained leadership responsibilities at the school, including professional learning. He began serving formally as a mentor and took newer Black teachers under his wing as the building continued to recruit and hire Black educators.

Baxter learned about Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, which the district had adopted a couple of years before. He learned that the standards had prompted Burbank Middle School to shift its professional learning approaches to embed learning and growth opportunities during the school day instead of the old model of Saturday workshops.

Baxter had noticed that opportunities to learn in collaboration with colleagues around specific learning needs and engage with coaches in ongoing dialogue about students' toughest challenges were critical to his own growth. He also heard district leaders explain how the standards were essential to the district's strategic goal to ensure access to high-quality teaching for each student.

In one of their frequent morning chats in Baxter's sixth year, Wyler asked Baxter when he was going to take the next logical step and become a principal. Baxter wasn't surprised — they had spoken about this before. But he wondered if he would be supported and satisfied in a new role. He had noticed that almost every school in their district had a white principal, and retention rates among Black leaders in their system were not encouraging.

Wyler explained to Baxter that the system was overhauling leader development and support. Guided by Standards for Professional Learning and the latest leadership research, the assistant superintendent for talent development was leading a new initiative to formalize the diversification of the leader pipeline with an emphasis on educators of color.

District leaders couldn't ignore the gains among Black students where more Black teachers and leaders had been hired. The district superintendent, who participated in a learning network with leaders from other districts, was modeling the pipeline effort after an initiative at another urban district her network had studied the previous year.

Ultimately, a principal development academy, which the district had developed in partnership with a local university, led Baxter to the principalship. He was in the first cohort — a small class that worked collaboratively over a two-year period to earn the initial leadership endorsement for his educator license.

The program combined elements of the university's existing education leadership program with customized

support for the district's cohort, including a mentor from the district and a residency in his school that provided opportunities to acquire and implement leadership skills and practices. The district also supported each cohort to remain connected as a learning network in the years following the academy to sustain the valuable relationships emerging leaders forged during their learning.

TAKING ACTION FOR EQUITY

During Baxter's time in the program, the district worked to infuse equity throughout professional learning. Baxter took every opportunity to encourage district leaders to move from vision to action. He frequently partnered with his colleagues to help the district look at multiple levels of the challenge of equity of access to learning for students and educators alike, from transforming system structures, including resources and data use, all the way to supporting school-level teams to examine and adopt culturally responsive practices.

As he assumed the role of principal at another middle school in the district, Baxter took seriously his responsibility to model ongoing learning and participate frequently in grade-level teams, monitoring how teachers used the district's data platform to pinpoint which students needed academic help and access to social services.

Remembering his own experience and drawing on lessons from his leadership academy, Baxter also ensured that recruiting, hiring, and supporting educators of color was an essential pillar of his school's improvement trajectory.

By the end of his second year as principal, he was pleased that, in his school, the data indicated that students had increased access and opportunity to excel and that the educators had those same opportunities and access. Looking ahead to his own future, he was determined that the district sustain its commitment to supporting him and his principal colleagues on their growth journey.

NOTE-TAKING PROMPTS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

- What critical school and district challenges are present?
- What strengths and improvement-oriented actions do you see in the vignette? Where do you see room for growth?
- Which Standards for Professional Learning do you see reflected? Note key phrases that represent the standards at work.
- What ideas, questions, or concerns does the vignette spark for your work in your context?

Standards for Professional Learning

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY PRACTICES
... understand their students' historical, cultural, and societal contexts, embrace student assets through instruction, and foster relationships with students, families, and communities.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION
... prioritize high-quality curriculum and instructional materials for students, assess student learning, and understand curriculum and implement through instruction.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE
... apply standards and research to their work, develop the expertise essential to their roles, and prioritize coherence and alignment in their learning.

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY DRIVERS
... prioritize equity in professional learning practices, identify and address their own biases and beliefs, and collaborate with diverse colleagues.

EVIDENCE
... create expectations and build capacity for use of evidence, leverage evidence, data, and research from multiple sources to plan educator learning, and measure and report the impact of professional learning.

LEARNING DESIGNS
... set relevant and contextualized learning goals, ground their work in research and theories about learning, and implement evidence-based learning designs.

IMPLEMENTATION
... understand and apply research on change management, engage in feedback processes, and implement and sustain professional learning.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY FOUNDATIONS
... establish expectations for equity, create structures to ensure equitable access to learning, and sustain a culture of support for all staff.

CULTURE OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY
... engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.

LEADERSHIP
... establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning, sustain coherent support to build educator capacity, and advocate for professional learning by sharing the importance and evidence of impact of professional learning.

RESOURCES
... allocate resources for professional learning, prioritize equity in their resource decisions, and monitor the use and impact of resource investments.

CONNECT. BELONG. SUPPORT.

UPDATES

WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2023

At Learning Forward, we're focused on creating professional learning experiences that allow you to connect with your colleagues while expanding your knowledge and skills. Here are some of the opportunities you can look forward to in the year ahead.

- Resource compilations on coaching, equity, and other topics;
- New tools for implementing Standards for Professional Learning;
- Book club discussions exclusively for comprehensive members;
- Online courses to deepen your knowledge;
- Webinars on addressing your toughest challenges; and
- Access to field leaders and opportunities to network at the Annual Conference.

For more information, visit **www.learningforward.org**.

UPDATES

Learning Forward's board of trustees, left to right: Nader Twal, Linda Chen, Ash Vasuveda, Segun Eubanks, Sue Sarber, Wendy Robinson, Denise Augustine, and Mark Elgart.

New roles for Learning Forward board members

Nader Twal, program administrator in the Long Beach Unified School District's Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, has joined Learning Forward's board of trustees for a three-year term. Twal is a graduate of the Learning Forward Academy, was a member of the Standards Advisory Council, and is a former columnist for *The Learning Professional*.

Ash Vasudeva, senior vice president at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is the new board president, and Sue Sarber, retired director of professional learning for Arlington (Virginia) Public Schools, is president-elect.

Retaining their seats on the board for the next three years are: Segun Eubanks, past president and professor of practice and director of the Center for Education and Innovation and Improvement in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park; Denise Augustine, superintendent of Indigenous education for the Ministry of Education in Victoria, British Columbia; Linda Chen, senior deputy superintendent of academics for Boston Public Schools; Mark Elgart, president and chief executive officer of Cognia; and Wendy Robinson, retired superintendent of Fort Wayne (Indiana) Community Schools.

WEBINARS FOCUS ON CRITICAL TOPICS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

From March through June, Learning Forward will host webinars every other Thursday on critical topics in professional learning. Topics include strategies for retaining great teachers, similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring, educator wellness strategies, evaluating professional learning through the Standards Assessment Inventory, and planning professional learning for the 2023-24 school year. Check out the full list of upcoming webinars at **learningforward.org/webinars/**

NETWORK SUPPORTS CURRICULUM-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

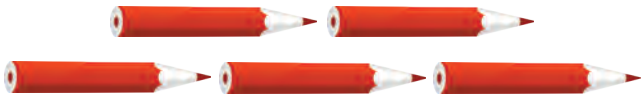
Learning Forward is designing a network focused on curriculum-based professional learning. With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the network will support districts building educator capacity to implement high-quality curricula.

The network will be anchored in Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning as well as the principles set forth in the reports *The Elements: Transforming Teaching Through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning* (Carnegie Corporation, 2020) and *Curriculum-Based Professional Learning: The State of the Field* (Center for Public Research and Leadership, 2022).

Learning Forward will invite nine district teams to participate in the network. Working collaboratively, the teams will use a continuous improvement process over the 2023-24 academic year to support their middle school math curriculum implementation so that all students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful learning.

An advisory team with expertise in math instruction, equity, professional learning, and curriculum implementation will provide input to Learning Forward as it refines the network design and plans to support the participating districts.

For more information, contact Michelle Bowman, vice president of networks & continuous improvement, at **michelle.bowman@learningforward.org.**



CONFERENCE TEAM REVIEWS 2023 SESSION PROPOSALS

Learning Forward's conference team is scoring the 740 session proposals submitted for the 2023 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. If you submitted a proposal, be sure to add **learningforward.org** to your safe senders list to ensure you get updates from the conference team. Notifications will be sent via email in May 2023.

Visit the conference proposal site at **lfp.learningforward.org** to check the status of your proposal, print and download a PDF of your proposal, sign your presenter agreement, and check session registration numbers if selected for the 2023 program.

Online courses cover continuous improvement, coaching, and leadership skills

Learning Forward's spring online courses continue in March and April with offerings for coaches, leaders, and professional learning facilitators.

Starting March 22, Leading a Learning Network will provide an overview of a structured continuous improvement network model, which has a proven track record of helping systems identify and solve unique problems of practice. Participants will gain the knowledge, skills, tools, and strategies for creating a structured improvement network that will help identify and solve an existing system-level problem.

Beginning March 27, Kendall Zoller, Chad Dumas, and Kathy Gross will lead Influence With Impact: Strategies That Support Change and Growth, providing tools to help participants increase credibility and strengthen relationships to lead skillfully.

Our final spring course, Implementing a Coaching Cycle, kicks off April 17, with Heather Clifton and Andy Mendelsberg providing coaches with practical strategies for engaging in planning conversations, key classroom supports, data gathering, and reflective conversations.

For more information on courses, visit **learningforward.org/online-courses-2/**

CELEBRATE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE STANDARDS

To celebrate the one-year mark of revised Standards for Professional Learning, Learning Forward is organizing events for the week of April 24-28 that will include new resources to support and strengthen standards implementation in diverse contexts. For more information, visit **standards.learningforward.org.**

KEYNOTE VIDEOS AND REFLECTION TOOL AVAILABLE

More than 3,000 educators who attended Learning Forward's 2022 Annual Conference received access to the full recordings of its keynote presentations as a benefit of attending the event in Nashville, Tennessee.

This year, Learning Forward developed reflection guides to accompany the archived presentations. Populated with questions to help viewers record their thoughts as they watch each keynote, the learning tool can be used as a discussion aid.

To view excerpted versions of the presentations from Jessyca Mathews, Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa, and Baruti Kafele, visit **conference.learningforward.org/2022-recap**. Learning Forward's conference recap also features Margarida Celestino delivering a student keynote speech; a student choral performance from Freedom Middle School, Franklin, Tennessee; and singer Emily Sullivan, a senior attending Page High School in Franklin, Tennessee.

STANDARDS GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS AVAILABLE IN THE BOOKSTORE

Learning Forward's *Action Guide for the Principal: Implementation Strategies and Innovation Configuration Maps for Standards for Professional Learning* is now available in the Learning Forward Bookstore.

This role-specific Action Guide describes the steps principals can take to implement Standards for Professional Learning and illustrates how to progress from entry-level implementation to ideal implementation using Innovation Configuration maps. The book includes tools to help principals plan first steps, reflect on current work, and coordinate their roles and responsibilities with those of other stakeholders.

Designed to be used individually or with a team, it is useful as a standalone resource or as a complement to other Standards for Professional Learning tools and resources. This is the first in a series of role-specific Action Guides. Books for system/central office leaders, coaches, and external partners will be released in coming months.

Learning Forward members receive a 20% discount, and orders of 25 or more qualify for a large-order discount. Visit **learningforward.org/store**

WELCOME TO NEW AND RENEWING DISTRICT MEMBERS

Learning Forward welcomes the following new district members:

- East Jasper School District, Heidelberg, Mississippi;
- Gallatin County Board of Education, Warsaw, Kentucky;
- North East Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas; and
- Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services, Cold Spring, Kentucky.

We are also pleased to continue our relationship with:

- Belton Independent School District, Belton, Texas;
- Cherry Creek School District, Aurora, Colorado;
- Hastings Public Schools, Hastings, Nebraska;
- Littleton Public Schools, Littleton, Colorado;
- Norman Public Schools, Norman, Oklahoma;
- Pattonville School District, St. Ann, Missouri;
- Richmond County School System, Augusta, Georgia;
- South Bend Community School Corporation, South Bend, Indiana; and
- School District of Clayton, Clayton, Missouri.

To learn more about district memberships, visit **learningforward.org/membership/**

Foundation scholarship and grant applications available

Learning Forward Foundation's 2023 scholarship and grant applications are available online.

Foundation awards include a $2,000 grant to a Learning Forward Affiliate needing to rebuild or generate a stronger organization as well as up to six Academy scholarships. Each scholarship will cover the cost of the tuition, and four of the scholarships include travel stipends.

The deadline to apply is March 15. Visit **www.foundation.learningforward.org** to learn more and apply.

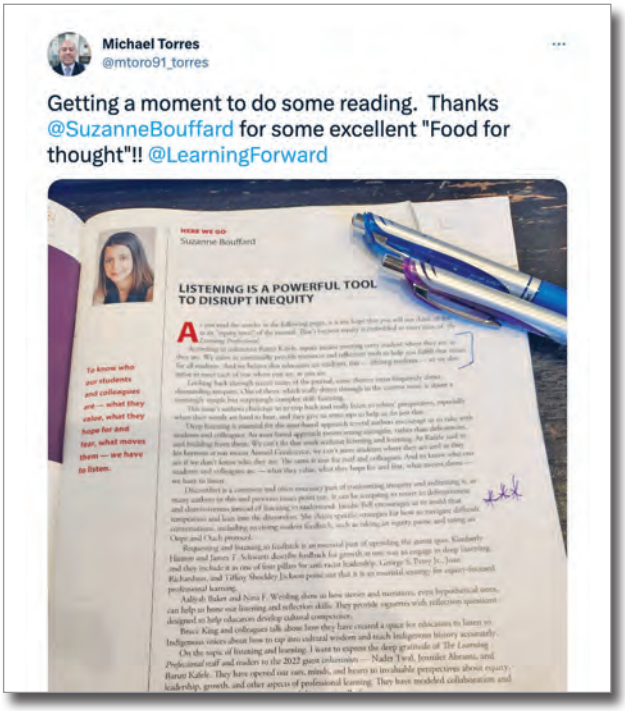
Anamika Jasani

New staff member joins Learning Forward

Learning Forward welcomes Anamika Jasani to the role of professional services project manager. Jasani has served in a variety of roles in education, including creativity, action, and service coordinator and project manager for residential schools in India and Kenya, as well as a public school teacher during the early years of the pandemic. She has a double master's degree in education and a teaching license from Vanderbilt University and Rhodes College. She is passionate about supporting education in a holistic way and likes to find creative ways to troubleshoot issues.

#TheLearningPro

FEATURED SOCIAL MEDIA POST



Follow us on social media. Share your insights and feedback about *The Learning Professional* by using **#TheLearningPro.**

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THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

ABOUT LEARNING FORWARD

Learning Forward shows you how to plan, implement, and measure high-quality professional learning so you and your team can achieve success with your system, your school, and your students.

We are the only professional association devoted exclusively to those who work in educator professional learning. We help our members effect positive and lasting change to achieve equity and excellence in teaching and learning.

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THROUGH THE LENS

OF LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Standards for Professional Learning describe the content, processes, and conditions of high-quality learning that makes a difference for students and educators. They are organized in a framework of three interconnected categories. Understanding each category and each standard can help learning leaders build systemic professional learning.

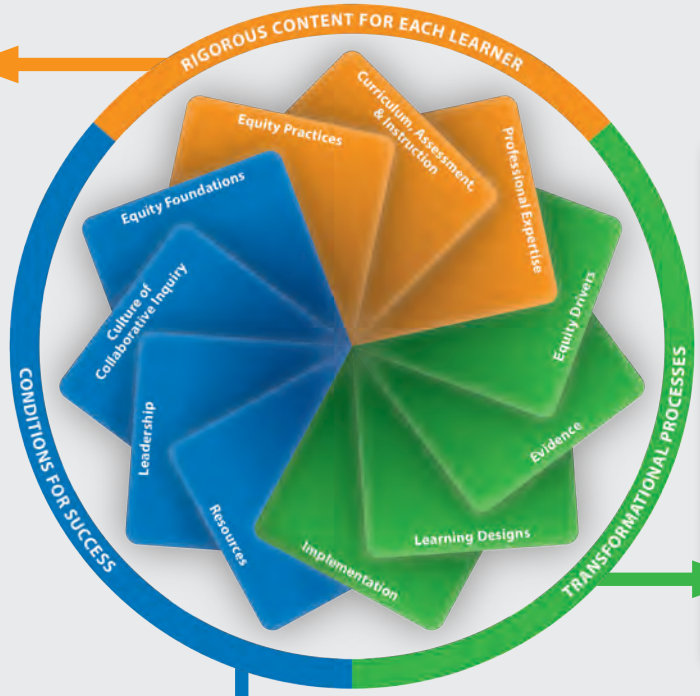
To help you deepen your understanding, this tool provides reflection questions that draw on articles from this issue of *The Learning Professional* and connect to standards from each category. You can use these questions to guide your reading of the articles or you can use them in conversations with colleagues — for example, during professional learning communities, observations, or planning discussions.

The page numbers after each question will take you to the article that corresponds to the question.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT STANDARDS TO TACKLE TURNOVER

Rigorous Content for Each Learner

- How does strengthening educators' social and emotional competencies further your school or system's efforts to enhance **equity practices**? (p. 30)
- What does your system do to nurture the development of **professional expertise** among administrators, particularly those leaders who support principals? (p. 34)



Transformational Processes

- How do the varied learning needs of educators inform what **learning designs** to use in professional learning? (p. 40)
- What do effective instructional coaches do to ensure the ongoing **implementation** of learning for teachers? (p. 26)

Conditions for Success

- Creating a **culture of collaborative inquiry** can happen within and among schools, systems, and even regions or states. How can networks encourage the growth of such cultures at a range of levels? (p. 9)
- Educators benefit from education systems that prioritize sustained professional learning with guidance in policy. How does the **leadership** of professional learning drive practice at your state, province, or other level? (p. 22)

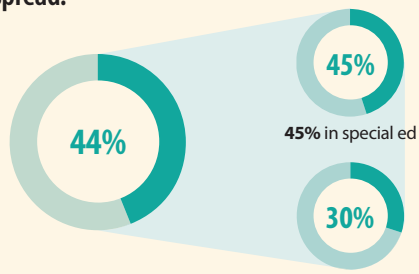
Learn more about Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning at **standards.learningforward.org**

How professional learning supports teacher retention

CURRENT TRENDS

Turnover is widespread.

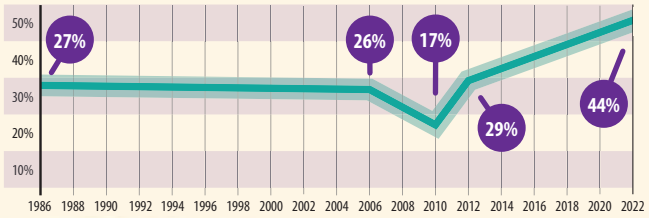
44% of U.S. public schools report teaching vacancies.[1]



45% in special ed

30% in general elementary

More teachers intend to leave than ever before.[2]



Teachers of color leave at a higher rate than white teachers.[3]

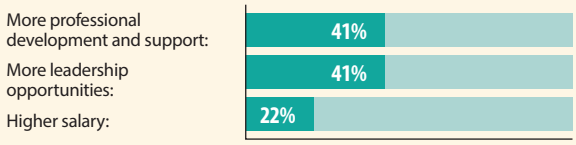
18% to **15%**

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CAN HELP

Yes, compensation matters.

Teachers are **31%** more likely to stay in districts with the highest salaries.[6]

Teachers of color ranked professional learning and leadership development as the best strategies for teacher retention – much more important than salaries.[4]



Teachers of color also rank these strategies for learning and growth highly:[5]

28% Ensure new teachers of color serving high-need students receive adequate support.

25% Provide more time for teacher collaboration.

24% Increase teachers' say in policy decisions.

23% Provide more training on effective classroom management strategies for all teachers.

CRITICAL RETENTION STRATEGIES

Retention will take transformation on multiple fronts. Professional learning-related strategies include:

- Bolstering school leadership and administrative support;
- Increasing access to professional collaboration and shared decision-making;
- Improved access to teaching and learning resources;
- Improving teacher preparation;
- Expanding teacher residencies; and
- Providing mentors.[6,7]

1. bit.ly/3E4WJJH | 2. bit.ly/3xk01or | 3. bit.ly/3jWFIul | 4. bit.ly/3k3iUsK | 5. bit.ly/3S4KiDy | 6. bit.ly/3YqwpBQ | 7. bit.ly/40W4pYi

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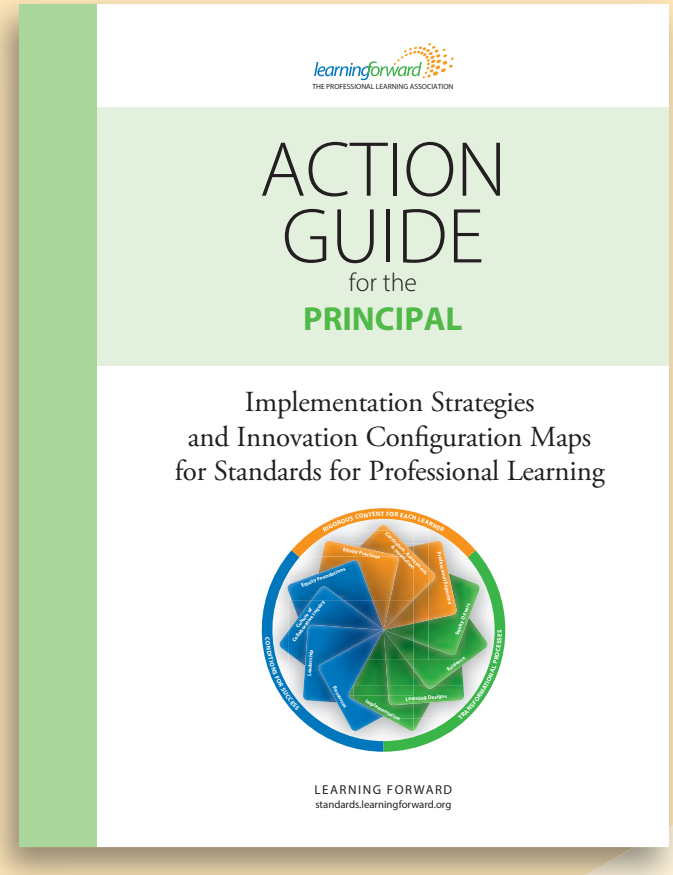
New book for principals

Action Guide for the Principal: Implementation Strategies and Innovation Configuration Maps for Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Forward's newest book is a comprehensive resource designed to help school principals implement Standards for Professional Learning in meaningful, effective ways. This role-specific action guide describes the steps principals can take to implement each of the 11 standards and illustrates how to progress from entry-level implementation to ideal implementation.

Additional roles coming soon: System/Central Office, Coaches, and External Partners.



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