



THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

**NEW JERSEY**

# **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**2018**

**LEARNING BEYOND THE  
HORIZON:  
MAKING IT MATTER FOR  
EDUCATORS AND  
STUDENTS**

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# Keynote Speaker

## Jennifer Abrams

### Diving Into the Deep End

Thursday, August 2nd

4:00pm-5:00pm

Alexander Ballroom



Jennifer Abrams is an international educational and communications consultant for public and independent schools, hospitals, universities and non-profits. Jennifer trains and coaches teachers, administrators, nurses, hospital personnel, and others on new employee support, supervision, being generationally savvy, having hard conversations and effective collaboration skills.

# Keynote Speakers



## Melinda George

Transforming School Culture  
Through Teacher-Led Learning  
Teams

Thursday, August 2nd  
9:00am-10:00am  
Alexander Ballroom

Learning Forward's Director of Policy  
and Partnerships



## Amy Andersen

Celebrate Every Child,  
Value Every Voice,  
Embrace Every Difference

Friday, August 3rd  
12:30pm-1:30pm  
Alexander Ballroom

NJ Teacher of the Year  
National Teacher of the Year Finalist

# Day 1 - August 2nd

**Breakfast: 7:00am-9:00am**

**General Session: 9:00am-10:00am**

**Welcome!**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Kim Tucker

**Keynote Presentation - Transforming School Culture Through Teacher-Led Learning Teams**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Melinda George

Effective leaders establish and sustain a culture that puts learning first. In schools, that means providing teachers with time to learn, plan, and reflect together. Collaborative professional learning changes teacher practice, increases retention and job satisfaction, and improves student outcomes. The keynote will provide an overview of a teacher-led cycle of learning that drives a culture of continuous improvement and collective responsibility. Explore the stages of the cycle as well as the conditions that need to be in place to support collaborative team learning.

**AM Session 1: 10:15am-11:10am**

**Connecting the Pieces: Using Coherence to Improve Effectiveness, Efficiency and Outcomes**

**Room: Dod**

Dr. Tracey Severns

Coherence exists when the entire school community is “pulling on the same rope in the same direction.” It occurs when the leader connects people, plans and processes in a way that makes the work more effective and efficient. Coherence requires a collaborative culture, common objectives, collective accountability and individual and organizational capacity.

Without coherence, time, energy and resources are wasted on competing priorities and contradictory practices that produce frustration, fragmentation and fatigue. During this workshop, administrators will learn how to integrate their work streams into a cohesive school improvement strategy that makes the work of improving student outcomes meaningful, measurable, and manageable.

**Teaching Artists & Teachers Unite! Creativity & Theatre to Transform Student Learning**

**Room: Maclean**

Michelle L. Marigliano, Pat Flynn, & Amanda Short

Young Audiences Arts for Learning, New Jersey’s premier arts education provider, will show how partnering with a teaching artist brings creativity and excitement to elementary teaching teams. Participants will experience how Theatre to Learn, a 4-year sequential theatre curriculum provides professional learning to help teachers integrate theatre into their language arts curriculum, while nurturing their own creative voices.

# Day 1 - August

## 2nd

Over the course of one year, a group of teachers from Little Egg Harbor made the transition from workshop participants to district science coaches. They now provide professional development within their schools and district while also acting as teacher leaders in county-wide workshops. They will share successes and challenges, and discuss resources that have supported their continued professional growth.

### **Making the Transformation from Teacher to Coach**

**Room: Fitzgerald**

Stacey Van der Veen & Bridget Arnold

### **Becoming a Professional Learning Advocate**

**Room: Henry**

Melinda George

Gain tips and tools for highlighting the impact professional learning has on teachers and students. From sharing your school or district's professional learning success story to advocating for Title IIA, learn how you can make a difference as an advocate for effective adult learning. Hear from educators who have shared their successes in New Jersey and beyond.

## **AM Session 2: 11:25am-12:20pm**

### **Transforming How Teams and Individuals Learn**

**Room: Dod**

Katherine Bassett

How do adults learn? How do they acquire expertise needed to perform at the highest levels of their profession? And, what might a career continuum, across which teachers would learn and grow in their craft, look like for education? Virtually every profession except teaching has such a career advancement structure. In this session, we will explore examples of career continua, examine a structure by which professionals learn and acquire expertise. Participants will leave with an increased understanding of how adults learn and roles that teacher leaders can play in the acquisition of expertise.

### **Gratitude Creates Growth: The Importance of Relationship and Growth Mindset for Maximizing Student & Teacher Potential**

**Room: Maclean**

Heather Lageman

Science has proven that social and emotional factors play an essential part in the acquisition of what we once regarded as purely academic knowledge and skills. Everyone's competence grows best in an environment of physical and emotional safety and support. How do we create an optimal learning environment for our students to maximize their potential? This session explores how building trust & cultivating a growth mindset fosters a culture of student and teacher success.

# Day 1 - August

## 2nd

Diversity is not the problem. How we respond-not respond to diversity can create barriers in schools. It's easy to see equity in education as a matter of fairness, access, and inclusion, but that's only if what's being fairly accessed is a system of teaching and learning that's fluid, responsive, dynamic, neutral, and able to meet the needs of our schools.

**Assessing our Own Culture, Diversity, Equity and Bias**

**Room: Fitzgerald**

Emil Carafa & Heather Moran

**Plan Smarter: Using Data to Drive Instruction**

**Room: Henry**

Alicia Pepe & Dean Robinson

Are you spending too much time delving into data, rather than setting goals, implementing instructional strategies, and assessing? Now that you have analyzed the data, you will learn to create evidence statements (goals) and determine instructional strategies that will help move students forward. Participants will use a cycle of continuous improvement to engage in a discussion that allows them to practice using data to select high-yield instructional strategies.

### Mini Sessions

**11:25am-11:45am & 12:00pm-12:20pm**

**Mini Session - Learn How to Use Protocols**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Kim Tucker & Vicki Duff

Take your Professional Learning Community beyond the horizon by using a variety of protocols. Participants will find them a helpful tool for holding professional conversations that need to occur in PLCs – conversations that will lead to increased student achievement and motivation. Protocols serve as a kind of co-facilitator for these professional conversations. They will transform the learning you do in teams!

**Lunch: 12:30pm-1:30pm**

**PM Session 1: 1:40pm-2:35pm**

**How Impact Your School's Culture**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Joseph Bouffard

**A Better School Climate - 5 Steps**

**Room: Dod**

Pat O'Keefe

Jump into action with 5 steps that will help you build a more positive, welcoming and productive school climate for students and staff. Get ready to define school climate, take a look at your school's current reality, build your students' social/emotional skills, plan to plan and learn to celebrate with a message.

# Day 1 - August

## 2nd

Do your students have enough to eat? Do your colleagues have enough to eat? Join us as we explore food insecurity in New Jersey schools: how does it happen? What is the impact on teaching and learning? How can you make change to support a culture of learning? Participants will consider their own school environments, think about visible and invisible effects of child and adult hunger on their own school's or district's culture, and discuss strategies that feed both bodies and minds.

### **On Our Plates: Food Insecurity Across the Economic Spectrum and its Impact on School Culture**

**Room: Maclean**

Susan Barry

### **Integrating a Digital Learning Culture**

**Room: Fitzgerald**

Jessica Nitzberg & Ross Herbert

Through the exploration of the Self Directed Growth Plan, Lead Teams, standard based report cards, PLC's, and blended learning this session will explore the impact of technology and digital integration in the classroom as a tool which enhances student learning.

### **Students "WIN" when PLC teams Drive Instruction with Data**

**Room: Henry**

Janet Ciarrocca, Sidney Dawson, Kathleen Cave, & Kyle McCormick

As part of the CAR pilot, NBT Schools have worked to ensure the work of their PLC's are driven by student data and learning needs. 2nd Grade PLC's at Livingston Park School have used a "WIN" block ("What I Need") to provide scaffolded lessons across the grade level based on specific student needs. The PLC has analyzed student data and planned tiered lessons across the grade level in Math. The admin team has supported them through creating an innovative "WIN" period to support this work.

## **PM Session 2: 2:50pm-3:45pm**

### **Learning and Leading: A Personalized Learning Experience**

**Room: Maclean**

Kathleen O'Flynn & Jodi Ben-Meir

Hear first-hand how the Learning Forward Team Grant influenced the development of a personalized learning experience for administrators and coaches in the Northern Valley Regional School District. Through technology-enhanced collaborative processes, individualized learning plans and video coaching, participants continue to increase capacity to build practices that enhance leadership skills and maintain a focus on teaching and learning.

### **Teacher Leaders: Empowering our Own**

**Room: Dod**

AJ Bianco & Erica Ripston

Teacher leaders are becoming the norm in our schools and it is time to empower them to find success. Teacher leaders are passionate educators that want to make positive change, mentor, collaborate, share ideas and highlight the school vision. This session will focus on teacher strengths within our buildings by looking at the needs of curriculum initiatives and promoting student growth.

# Day 1 - August

## 2nd

The school-to-prison pipeline is a very real issue in many schools. Students go to school to receive an education, yet many of them leave with a record. Through this session, participants will learn about five actionable steps they can take to eliminate the pipeline, by employing restorative justice, identifying cultural deficit bias, which will ensure an equitable education to every child, everywhere, every day!

**Breaking Down Barriers to Build Success**

**Room: Fitzgerald**

Kelisa Wing

**Peer and Expert: The NJEA Model of Teacher Leadership**

**Room: Henry**

Rich Wilson & Michael Cohan

Successful teacher leadership requires the deft navigation of the space between exerting a level of expertise while maintaining positive peer relationships. This learning experience will explore the NJEA Model of Teacher Leadership which blends a four-fold practice approach with the teacher leader model standards to move a school from being a community of learners to a community that learns.

**General Session: 4:00pm- 5:00pm**

**Keynote Presentation - Diving Deeper into Hard Conversations**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Jennifer Abrams

Based on Jennifer's book, Having Hard Conversations, and her work with conflict and interpersonal communications, this session will provide participants with resources, strategies and scripting tools for having those necessary hard conversations.

**Book Signing: 5:00pm- 5:30pm**

\*Books will be available for purchase\*

**Welcome Reception and Networking  
Activities**

**5:15pm- 6:15pm**



# Day 2 - August 3rd

7:00am

**Morning Yoga Class & Walk through the Park**

**Breakfast: 7:00am-9:00am**

**General Session: 9:00am-11:45am**

**Keynote - Navigating Having Hard Conversations with Jennifer Abrams**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Jennifer Abrams

As administrators, coaches or colleagues, we often come up against situations where difficult topics must be addressed. What do we know about the best strategies for those moments? What questions should we be asking ourselves before we speak, and what environments are best for when we do speak? Based on Jennifer's book, *Having Hard Conversations*, and her work with conflict and interpersonal communication, this session will provide participants with action plans and scripting tools for having those necessary hard conversations.

**Lunch: 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Keynote - Celebrate Every child, Value Every Voice, Embrace Every Difference**

**Room: Alexander Ballroom**

Amy Andersen

**PM Session 1: 1:10pm-1:55pm**

**Customizing Professional Learning for All**

**Room: Dod**

Patty McGee

This session provides an opportunity for facilitators of professional study to explore fresh, creative designs for professional learning including leadership groups, residencies, and lab demonstrations. Participants will customize the study experiences for teacher-learners so that there is a natural transfer to classroom instructional practices. Join us with specific teachers, concepts, and/or classrooms in mind to practically plan powerful learning for all.

**From Co-blab-oration to Co-labor-ation: Developing PLCs that Actually Improve Teaching and Learning**

**Room: Maclean**

Dr. Tracey Severns

What distinguishes a high-functioning PLC from a group of teachers who share common planning time? What practices and protocols elevate the effectiveness of PLCs? How can data and assessments be used in PLCs to improve instructional practice and increase student achievement? During this interactive session, participants will learn the answers to these questions and leave ready to engage in high-impact PLCs.

# Day 2 - August 3rd

## **I have Seen the Future and it is Bistro Tables**

**Room: Fitzgerald**

Barry Bachenheimer

There are many ways to transform school culture. Come to a presentation to find how the Pascack Valley Regional High School District uses a variety of classroom and hallway furniture as the catalyst to adjust how students and faculty work and learn together.

## **Hot Spotters, Needful Students and Data: Emerson's Journey**

**Room: Henry**

Brian Gatens

How does your school identify and help your neediest, non-Special Education students? What kind of data do you look at and where do you allocate your resources? Come learn how Emerson used teams of teachers, support service personnel, and administrators to analyze data and restructure student support services. Inspired by the "Hot Spotters" work of Atul Gawande, Emerson is happy to share our success with LFNJ.

## **PM Session 2: 2:05pm-2:50pm**

### **Taking Charge of Your Leadership**

**Room: Maclean**

Lisa Hirkaler

How can we go from good to great as teacher leaders? What have we done, what can we do and where will we go? Lets share our stories, ideas, and inspiration for growth as a teacher leaders. In a cafe style format, we will discuss possibilities and exchange ideas as we discover, learn, share, and grow as teacher leaders.

### **Bridging the Data Divide Between Professional Learning and Student Growth**

**Room: Fitzgerald**

Bruce Preston

Bridging the gap between professional learning and student growth seems difficult at best. More often it's all together illusive. Join Howell Township Public Schools in designing strategies that will bridge that gap. The session will make use of 'Gamestorming', design thinking protocols to build innovative and adaptable solutions with the power to transform professional learning and improve student outcomes.

### **Transforming District Professional Learning**

**Room: Henry**

Katherine Bassett

In this interactive session, participants will unpack the five principles that constitute the Model Code of Ethics for Educators, discuss two examples of ethical dilemmas faced by educators, and leave with an increased understanding of how to handle difficult issues that we face as educators on a daily basis. With the development of the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE), we have the principles to provide a basis for discussion amongst educators, guidance, and a foundation for our moral and ethical behavior. The MCEE helps educators mitigate the risks inherent within the profession and is designed as a guide for current and future educators to construct the best course of action when faced with ethical dilemmas, providing a basis for educator learning, self-reflection, and self-accountability.

Site-Based Inquiry for Professional Learning

Room: Dod

Dr. Brad Siegel & Amy D'Ambola

This workshop spotlights a case study of professional learning involving a diverse group of school and community stakeholders aimed reflection, inquiry, and shifting norms of practice. Broadening our lens of STEM, we planned a field trip to spark new questions, perspectives, and ideas that ordinarily would not enter a teacher's mindset when engaging in professional learning. Using this experience, we transformed the entire process to engage with a strategic plan for our regional districts.

General Session: 3:00pm-3:30pm

Reflection - Next Steps - Prizes

Room: Alexander Ballroom

Kim Tucker

# Thank You !

On behalf of the Learning Forward  
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