



The Professional Learning Association

Learning Forward PA Vision:
Every educator engages in effective professional learning everyday so every student achieves.

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Co-Presidents' Message

Happy New Year to all our Learning Forward PA members!

It's hard to believe that January is already a memory – a memory of record-breaking cold, far too frequent snowfalls, snow days, late starts, and early dismissals across the entire Commonwealth! Take heart, though; as educators, who tend to be eternal optimists, February brings not only Valentine's Day – for romantics, young and old – but also the reality that in just a few short weeks, Daylight Saving Time begins (March 9), and Spring arrives on March 13!

As reflected in our name, Learning Forward PA is definitely looking "forward", and we've included information in this newsletter that will update you on various LFPA projects. As you read this newsletter, it is our hope that you will share the information with your colleagues, recommend the Learning Forward PA website (www.learningforwardpa.org) to them as a wonderful professional resource, and that you will encourage your colleagues to join LFPA in 2014!!!

Fall Institute Receives Kudos



The evaluations are in for the October 15, 2013 Institute "Aligning Teacher Effectiveness, Learning Communities, and Curriculum in Preparing for the Rigor of the PA Common Core," and the LFPA Board is thrilled with the overwhelmingly positive feedback! Jay McTighe and Joellen Killion, the keynote speaker and afternoon breakout sessions facilitators, earned such comments as "Excellent"; "Practical, useful, relevant information on the Core"; "Mr. McTighe's presentation allowed me to understand how the Common Core can increase student rigor and, if implemented well, teacher effectiveness"; "Useful Resources"; "Excellent modeling".



The panel discussion, representing various stakeholders in the Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness program, was also well-received by the participants who commented "Excellent choice of participants"; "It really helped to hear from all perspectives on this (issue)"; "Always interesting to hear from various perspectives".



Patrick Winters from Eastern Lancaster County School District shared,

"This year was the first year I attended the Learning Forward PA Fall Conference and also the first time I heard Jay McTighe speak. I was in attendance with members from Our District Office Support Team, and what Jay had to say about writing curriculum, the importance of the PA Core Standards, and the key components of Understanding by Design were transformational for me, as a leader in our District. It helped me set a course in my District for insuring that all curriculum 7-12 was guaranteed and viable for ALL students and was designed with a focus on transfer goals, standards, key understanding, essential questions, and assessment. I am excited for the direction we are now moving in our District and am already looking forward to next year's conference."

The entire Board and particularly Ann Appolloni and Marcy Hessinger, this year's Institute Co-Chairs, thank all who attended the conference and who contributed to the collegial environment that is always a hallmark of Learning Forward PA's professional learning opportunities.

LFPA Announces October 2014 Institute

Will Richardson will be the key facilitator at this year's Learning Forward PA annual Institute. Mr. Richardson is a well-known and out-spoken advocate for change in schools and classrooms "in the context of the diverse new learning opportunities that the Web and other technologies now offer" and that are often so readily available to everyone – especially our students. His presentation at the LFPA Institute is entitled "Educating Modern Learners: The Opportunities and Challenges of Schooling in the Connected World."



A former public school educator of 22 years, he was one of a handful of original education bloggers (www.willrichardson.com), and over the past eight years, he has spoken to tens of thousands of educators in over a dozen countries and at TED talks (available online) about the merits of online learning networks for personal and professional growth and the reality of change in education.

Will is a co-founder of Modern Learner Media, which is dedicated to helping parents and policy makers develop new context for new conversations around education. He also co-founded Powerful Learning Practice (www.plpnetwork.com), a "unique professional development program that has mentored over 10,000 teachers around the world in the last six years." Will has authored four books, most recently *Why School? How Education Must Change When Learning and Information are Everywhere* (September, 2012), published by TED books and based on his most recent TEDxTalk in Melbourne, Australia. Currently, this book is the #1 best-selling book of all books ever published by TED! His articles have appeared in numerous journals, newspapers, and magazines, including *Ed Leadership*, *District Administration*, *The New York Times*, and the *English Journal*. He has also served as a member of the national advisory board for the George Lucas Education Foundation.

The LFPA Institute will be held **October 14, 2014**, from **8:30AM to 4:00PM**, at the **Holiday Inn, Grantville** (Harrisburg-Hershey). The registration fee of **\$155** includes the conference fee, continental breakfast, lunch, and annual LFPA membership. Further details about the Institute - including additional information about the day's agenda, registration, and special overnight rates for a limited number of rooms at the hotel – will be posted on the Learning Forward PA website.

Put the Institute date on your professional calendar today and plan on joining colleagues from across the state in this exciting and thought-provoking professional learning day!

Learning Forward PA Establishes Scholarship

At the October 15, 2013, annual Institute, the establishment of a Learning Forward PA scholarship for a Milton Hershey School student was announced. Since the inception of Learning Forward PA (formerly Pennsylvania Staff Development Council), the Milton Hershey School has been the site of the organization's Board meetings and several annual Institutes. In recognition of the School's support, Learning Forward PA is funding a \$500 scholarship that will be awarded to a Milton Hershey School student 1) who is planning to attend a college/university and to major in education; 2) who is identified as a student with a strong work ethic, and 3) who demonstrates the desire to be a life-long learner. The Milton Hershey School staff will select the recipient of this scholarship based on these criteria, and the student will be awarded the scholarship at graduation ceremonies this year. The student will also meet and be recognized by the LFPA Board at their May meeting in Hershey.

Institute Attendees Fund Scholarship

Funding for the recently established Learning Forward PA scholarship for a Milton Hershey School student is primarily from the basket raffle held at the October 15 Institute. Eighteen unique and tempting baskets with such interesting titles as “Taste of Italy”, “Halloween Treats with *Witch* to Pamper and Indulge”, and “There’s *Snow* Place Like Home” were donated for the raffle, and the Institute attendees were generously enthusiastic about purchasing tickets when it was announced that the proceeds would be used to fund the LFPA scholarship. \$470 was raised through the basket raffle, and the Board congratulates the 18 winners and thanks all who participated in this fundraiser!



Learning Forward PA Membership Grows

At the December Board meeting of LFPA, Kathy Gibson, Membership Chair, announced that the current membership of Learning Forward PA is 532 – a record high in membership. The Board is especially pleased by the number of new members who joined LFPA in the past year. To continue this growth, the Board encourages you to share with your colleagues LFPA information – especially the Learning Forward PA website as a professional resource – and to encourage them to join LFPA.

Learning Forward PA Funds Mini-Grant



Salisbury Township School District is the proud winner of the 2013 Learning Forward PA Mini Grant for Professional Learning. LFPA’s purpose in establishing this \$1000 grant is “to support innovative professional learning that exemplifies Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning in action”.

In alignment with those Standards, Salisbury Township’s proposal was to use the grant funds “to purchase texts specific to the Common Core (ELA and math) for each grade span. Texts will supplement scheduled face-to-face TL/PLC meetings, as well as online asynchronous activities.” As the recipients of the Mini Grant, Salisbury will share at the October 14, 2014, Institute how the Grant money supported their work and the results of their project. Accepting the grant was Dr. Randy Ziegenfuss, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.

To be eligible for the LFPA Mini Grant, you must be working in an educational system, be a member of Learning Forward PA, and complete an application by the **July 1, 2014**, deadline. The application and additional Grant information is available at www.learningforwardpa.org. Questions? Contact Board member Angie Ryan at 717-520-2850.

Pennsylvanian Elected to Learning Forward Board at Dallas Conference

Twenty-three Pennsylvanians braved the ice and snow to travel to Dallas in December to attend the Learning Forward Annual Conference. This conference is always characterized by cutting-edge keynotes and general sessions, myriad interactive learning sessions, and opportunities to form lasting professional relationships.

A highlight for those of us from Pennsylvania who attended the Conference was the announcement that Dr. Janet Samuels, Superintendent of Norristown Area School District, has become a member of the national Learning Forward Board of Trustees. Dr. Samuels recently shared her thoughts with Learning Forward PA on becoming a trustee:

“As educators, we have an amazing opportunity to impact the teaching and learning of students. High quality professional learning remains one of the most powerful opportunities to support teaching practice. As a member of the Board of Trustees, my vision is to further the work of Learning Forward, and support its recognition, nationally and

internationally, as the preeminent organization for educator development. The Pennsylvania Affiliate has an incredible opportunity to perpetuate Learning Forward's mission by advocating, passionately and intentionally, throughout the Commonwealth for educators and children through professional learning."

As Learning Forward continues to advocate at the national and state level for professional learning that leads to changed educator practices and improved student results, the entire Learning Forward PA Board and members congratulate Dr. Samuels on her election to the national Board.

Learning Forward PA Planning Spring Sessions

Learning Forward PA is planning to bring back its regional networking sessions this Spring! At one time these LFPA (formerly Pennsylvania Staff Development Council) sponsored sessions gave members and colleagues an opportunity to discuss more deeply topics addressed at the annual Institute or to convene around timely issues facing education professionals in a particular area or across the Commonwealth. Each Board member represents a particular region in the state, and that information is posted on the Learning Forward PA website. We are looking for input on the selection of specific topics, speakers, location, and dates for the regional networking sessions, so if you would like to get more involved in Learning Forward PA by assisting in the planning and coordinating of this event in your area, please contact Claudia Shulman (claudiashulman@yahoo.com). Include your name and contact information, and she will forward that to the Board member(s) representing your region.

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