



Learning Forward PA Fall Institute: October 15, 2013

Please *save* the date and plan to join us at our annual Fall Institute to be held on Tuesday October 15, 2013 at the Holiday Inn, Grantville (Harrisburg-Hershey).

We plan to have two speakers this year and the title of the Fall Institute will be, “Aligning Teacher Effectiveness, Learning Communities, and Curriculum in Preparing for the Rigor of the PA Common Core.”



One of our speakers will be Jay McTighe. Jay is an accomplished author, having co-authored 11 books, including the award-winning and best-selling *Understanding by Design* series with Grant Wiggins. He has an extensive background in professional development and is a regular speaker at national, state, and district conferences and workshops. He has made

presentations in 47 states within the United States, in seven Canadian provinces, and internationally in 19 countries on six continents. He was selected to participate in the Educational Policy Fellowship Program through the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D. C., and served as a member of the National Assessment Forum a coalition of education and civil rights organizations advocating reforms in national, state, and local assessment policies and practices.

Our other speaker will be Joellen Killion, the senior advisor for our national organization, Learning Forward for which she has formerly served as its deputy executive director. Her work focuses on increasing student achievement through effective professional learning for all educators. Joellen is a frequent contributor to educational publications and author of ten books on the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning. She has over 30 years experience as a facilitator, coordinator, and supervisor of professional development. Her particular interests are



collaborative learning teams, evaluation and program audits, standards for professional learning, coaching, policy to support professional development, and comprehensive planning and implementation of high-quality, standards-based, results-focused professional learning.

She has extensive experience in planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of professional development at the school, system, and state/provincial level. She has conducted evaluations of projects funded by federal and private foundation grants.

Plan to join us on October 15 for a valuable professional learning opportunity.

Learning Forward PA

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Special points of interest:

- *Fall Institute Speakers: Jay McTighe and Joellen Killion*
- *Highlight: North Allegheny School District*
- *Learning Forward PA Resource: Innovation Configuration Maps*

2012-2013 Winner of Learning Forward's Mini Grant for Exemplary Professional Development: North Allegheny School District

Learning Forward PA is interested in funding innovative, exemplary, professional development opportunities around the state. Once a year, Learning Forward PA funds a selected mini grant of \$1,000.00 to be awarded to someone who is currently working in an educational system and is also currently a member of Learning Forward PA to help them to implement their project.

In 2012, Mrs. Karyn Dobda, the Coordinator of Staff Development and Strategic Planning at North Allegheny School District in Wexford, PA was the recipient of Learning Forward PA's mini grant for professional development. Here's some information and highlights about the professional development plan developed by North Allegheny and their mini-grant application.

Program Goals

Beginning in with the 2011-12 school year, the North Allegheny School District Professional Staff engaged in a series of staff development activities utilizing strategies from *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, by Dr. Robert Marzano. Utilizing face-to-face sessions, professional learning communities, and job embedded assignments; this three year program engaged all professionals in the process of reviewing research and data to implement research-based instructional strategies in the schools and develop of a common language and framework of instruction. This instructional framework was presented that addressed three characteristics of high quality teaching: (1) the use of effective instructional strategies; (2) the use of effective classroom management strategies; and (3) the need for effective classroom curriculum design.

As an End Result of the North Allegheny School District Strategic Plan, a district-wide committee was formed to revise the current professional development model with the purpose of integrating research-based best practices and provide related professional development opportunities. This group reviewed research on the best practices associated with staff

development, and their impact on student achievement. It was determined that the ten instructional design questions of *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction* would serve as the framework for the newly designed Instructional Strategies component of the district's staff development programs. The goals of the program were:

- Implementation of researched-base instructional strategies in the schools;
- Reflection upon current educational research to plan and structure professional development for staff including activities focused on improving student achievement; and,
- Collaboration with colleagues through focused discussions on ways to improve classroom instruction.

Evidence of Job-Embedded Staff Development

In his book *Transforming Professional Development into Student Results*, Douglas Reeves (2010) stated that "research on professional development has found that effective professional development has three essential characteristics: (1) a focus on student learning, (2) rigorous measurements of adult decisions, and (3) a focus on people and practices, not programs" (p. 21). The Instructional Strategies Program focused on student results and achievement, while exploring the actions in the classroom that directly influence those results. The job embedded activities provided numerous opportunities for professional staff to apply, practice, and reflect on the course content. Teacher participation in learning communities provided opportunities for research and inquiry in a supportive and collaborative environment. The professional learning community served as a critical structure for job embedded assignments. Through face-to-face in-service sessions and participation in learning communities, professional staff was provided with the support and opportunities for the implementation of research-based instructional strategies to improving student achievement. Professional staff reviewed research to identify which strategies have shown a high probability of

effectiveness in the classroom. Effective teaching occurs when professional staff can determine the appropriate strategy to employ in specific classroom situations.



Impact on Staff Learning

Next to teacher quality, research has demonstrated that school leadership has a profound impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2007). Administrator engagement in identifying and utilizing instructional strategies to develop a common language and framework of instruction is of utmost importance for building capacity in the district. At their monthly meeting district administrators engaged in group discussions focusing on the reading from *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, as well as other related selections from professional journals. By working in collaborative administrative teams, the session discussions lead to the development of building-based plans that supported the district and program goals designed to increase student achievement. These collaborative teams were the fundamental means for improving student learning and achievement.

The instructional delivery of this program utilized many high quality descriptors of professional development. Through the collaboration of administrators and teachers leadership capacity continued to develop in the district. Tools such as technology, which will continue to evolve over the next several years, will be incorporated into the program as appropriate. For this professional development program, small sessions of instruction with repeated exposure topics sustained over a three-year period will be

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North Allegheny School District (Continued)

preferred to longer sessions with extensive information delivery. The job embedded opportunities resulted in meaningful, sustained use in the schools.

Budget and Assessment

A formative assessment tool was utilized at the end of every session. Results from these assessments were reviewed by the Coordinator of Staff Development, and used to modify program content and help determine the need for review and/or additional time on the topics. Specific attention was given to the responses for questions involving a likert scale response and open-ended comments to the following items:

- The program/activity contributed to my knowledge/skills as a professional.
- This program/activity will contribute to students' learning and achievement.
- Describe at least one useful aspect of this program/activity.
- If this program/activity were to be offered again, describe at least one improvement.



- Suggest at least one next step for this topic.

Feedback was also gathered through direct communication with administrative and teacher leaders at each of the face-to-face training sessions.

The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction is just one of the over ninety eBooks purchased in 2010 by the district through this online library. Since North Allegheny School District's purchase in 2010, twenty-six new titles have been added to the collection. The mini-grant

funds was allocated as follows:

- Approximately \$500 was used to fund a portion of the \$2400 purchase price adding the additional eBooks to the GALE Virtual Reference b Library.
- Approximately \$300 was used to update resource materials such as books, professional journal subscriptions, DVDs, and other materials in the Staff Development Library. Another consideration for this use was the purchase of software for use in the Staff Development Library for the creation of podcast modeling the use of the research-based instructional strategies in the classrooms in the district.
- Approximately \$200 was used to fund attendance at conferences for the Coordinator of Staff Development's professional development.

Standards Into Practice: School-Based Roles Innovation Configuration Maps for Standards for Professional Learning Published by Learning Forward (2012)

Written by Dr. Fran Miller

One characteristic of a high performing system is having clearly communicated roles and responsibilities. Learning Forward has developed a resource that can support your organization's attainment of that goal. *Standards Into Practice: School-Based Roles. Innovation Configuration Maps for Standards for Professional Learning*, developed by Learning Forward (2012), is a complete guide that defines stakeholders' roles within a school system's organization.

This gem has been co-authored by Joellen Killion, Shirley Hord, Patricia Roy, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Stephanie Hirsh. They organized this resource beginning with an Introduction that

explains the history, the "How to" use this valuable resource, and the purpose for using the innovation configurations maps (IC maps). An IC map explains the effective use of a professional learning standard in action according to one's role. Conveniently located after the Introduction is the complete set of Standards for Professional Learning as well as their elaborations. I found this to be an added bonus since I didn't have to look around for my book of Standards when using this resource!

The next section is where the Innovation Configuration Maps begin. Maps have been developed for the roles of the

Teacher, Coach, School Leadership Team, and the Principal. Each role is explained according to the Standards. Research-based, key actions are explained for each Standard and are defined for each role; they are described as "Desired Outcome" statements. The authors articulated a continuum of actions in decreasing value, starting with the ideal on the left end of the continuum.

A Crosswalk is shared as another valuable tool for users of this book. The Crosswalk is a matrix of the outcomes for each of the roles listed by Standard.

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Innovation Configuration Maps for Standards for Professional Learning *(Continued)*

It helps the user to see the holistic nature of the responsibilities each role must fill in order to support one another in order to develop a system that functions effectively.

The last two sections of this resource are the most valuable: the User Guide and Tools. The User Guide defines terms and will help the user develop a thorough understanding and plan for use. The Tools are to be used as you implement this valuable resource. Learning Forward wants you to provide Standards Based Professional Learning while learning about Standards Based Professional

Learning! They've given you the tools to do it!

Prior to purchasing this book, here are two pieces of advice...

1. This is not a cover-to-cover, "read on the beach," type of book. It is a book of tools, filled with instruments, or "rabbits" for your professional development "hat."
2. Write your name in your book! Because this convenient resource has everything you need in one easy to find location, it will become one of those well-loved, often used resources that are shared and passed around between colleagues.



The State of Professional Learning in PA

Written by Dr. Fran Miller

Last Fall, Learning Forward PA approved a strategic plan that included a goal that focused on developing leadership capacity. We held our Annual Fall Institute and shared our strategic plan with those who were present. We also posted our plan on our website. We explained the link between standards-based professional learning and student achievement. That was last October. As the school year progressed, our board has been wondering...

Are there districts in Pennsylvania who are truly practicing Standards-Based Professional Learning? If so, we'd like to know. Our board members represent several regions throughout the Commonwealth. As we reflect on those with whom we interact that work in districts and educational organizations throughout the State, we are fearful that the outlook is grim. We have not yet received reports from districts or Intermediate Units who tell us they are attempting to implement professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students through the use of learning communities, skillful leaders, coordinated resources, managed data, learning designs, learning designs, implementation based upon the research

research on change theory, and aligned, measured student outcomes.

In fact, as I peruse district websites throughout our Commonwealth, we continue to have districts who label days in which communities of professionals gather to learn and grow using the outdated term, "inservice days." This past month, I posed the question on Learning Forward Pa's Facebook page, "Learning Forward PA would like to know... **Are there professional development efforts occurring in your district that are having an impact on Student Achievement? How do you know? Please share.**" I did not receive any replies. One "friend" reposted the question asking others to respond with the "good things" that are happening in our state. Still, no response. Hoping to broaden the field to the national level, I reposted the question on Linked In, a social networking site. The group I posted it to was the American Association of School Administrators. I did receive one response. It was, "Sadly, not yet."

The next day, I noticed another post on LinkedIn by a gentleman who is a member of the same group. His question was this: "What's the point of professional development, anyway?" I

was intrigued by the lively discussion that followed as I read further into his post. He seemed to be asking the same question I was asking... If we aren't going to measure professional learning, then why do it? The participants who joined in the conversation did understand the ultimate impact on student achievement. They agreed and explained that measuring professional learning is, "messy business" and often turns into measuring whether or not the day or the speaker was enjoyable.

One solution that was offered was to measure the results of our adult learning similar to how we approach our reflection on student learning during Professional Learning Community meetings. The writer cleverly suggested replacing "students" with "staff" in each of the questions/statements as the PLC plans for, and follows up professional development efforts. Your reflection questions could then read as follows:

1. What should *staff* know and be able to do as a result of this professional learning opportunity?
2. How will we know that the *staff* are not learning?

Learning Forward PA Mini-Grant & Professional Development Awards

Learning Forward PA is pleased to announce an opportunity for your educational organization!

A mini grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 could be awarded to your educational organization for the upcoming school year. The purpose of the grant is to support innovative professional learning that exemplifies Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning in action.

To qualify, educational organizations need to write descriptive proposals using the seven categories listed here. As you write your mini grant proposal, it is high-

ly advised that applicants refer to Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (which can be found at <http://www.learningforwardpa.org/>) so an understanding of the full intent of each standard is developed. The Mini Grant Scoring Rubric should also be viewed and can be found at <http://www.learningforwardpa.org/mini%20grant-2012%20rubric.pdf>

Please be explicit. When you describe the professional learning that will be funded by this grant, list each of the seven

sections and show evidence of how that particular standard will come to life.

1. Learning Communities
2. Leadership
3. Resources
4. Data
5. Learning Design
6. Implementation
7. Outcomes



Each category can earn up to 4 points, adding up to, potentially, 28 points.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Want to Share with Other Learning Forward PA Members?

Would you be interested in sharing with other Learning Forward PA (LFPA) members?

Perhaps you have some great ideas about collaborative professional learning or professional development that is happening in your school district. Or, maybe you have written a short article that you would like to share with other LFPA members.

Perhaps a team of teachers in your school has an innovative way they are using student data to effectively promote student achievement.

Or, has your district undergone some type of change process recently with positive results? Maybe you have a professional resource or book that you think might interest others.

If you do, please consider sending that information to Learning Forward PA at speak2you3@comcast.net for possible inclusion in an upcoming Learning Forward PA newsletter. *We would love to hear from you.*

The State of Professional Learning in PA (*Continued*)

3. How do we respond when *staff* do not learn?

Learning Forward PA would like to know.

We would love to know! Email us at Learningforwardpa@gmail.com

4. How do we respond when *staff* learn more?

How can we support you or your organization?

So, the lack of data actually becomes data for Learning Forward PA and the question still remains... **What is the state of professional learning in YOUR educational organization?**

Is there someone who needs to be informed of the Standards for Professional Learning? Or maybe you are doing great things and we don't even know about it!

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Learning Forward PA

Our Vision

Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

Our Mission

Learning Forward PA advances educator effectiveness and student results through standards-based professional learning.

Learning Forward PA believes...

** Effective professional learning is fundamental to student learning.*

** All educators have an obligation to improve their practice.*

** Students achieve when educators assume collective responsibility for student learning.*

** Sustainable learning cultures require skillful leadership.*

** Improving student learning and professional practice requires ongoing systemic and organizational change.*



Resources for Professional Development

Designing an Understanding-based Curriculum around Common Core Standards by Jay McTighe

<http://midwestprincipalscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/McTighe-handout-CCSS-and-UbD.pdf>

This is a 100-page PDF file written by Jay McTighe in which he clearly outlines and demonstrates how to incorporate Common Core State Standards into a Understanding by Design curriculum. All stages of designing and organizing a quality curriculum are addressed in a step-by-step explanation along with examples from various subject areas.

From Common Core Standards to Curriculum: Five Big Ideas by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins

http://midwestprincipalscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/McTighe_Wiggins_FINAL_Common_Core_Standards.pdf

This 12 page article outlines five important ideas and misconceptions about the Common Core State Standards and their translation into a curriculum.

2007 Instructional Coaching Conference Keynote Speech: "Take a Stand" by Joellen Killion

<http://vimeo.com/16035658>

In this 48 minute video, Joellen Killion describes some of the fundamental beliefs essential to coaches' work, how those beliefs are developed and refined, and how they influence what a coach does each day.


