

A Whirlwind of Learning in Vancouver
Award winners exemplify the Standards for Professional Learning
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At Learning Forward's 2016 Annual Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, board president John Eyolfson and I recognized several school systems and organizations for their attention to effective professional learning. We gave out seven awards, which we named "the Learnies" -- one for each of the seven Standards for Professional Learning. Here are the awards and their winners.

Learning Communities: The Learning Communities standard emphasizes the importance of a commitment to continuous improvement, development of collective responsibility, and goal alignment to promote coherence. The winner of this award is Carver Middle School in Spartanburg, South Carolina. This school also earned the first Learning School designation last April. The school leveraged learning communities to close the achievement gap and increase success for every student and every educator.

Leadership: According to this standard, great leaders:

- * Develop their own and others' capacity;
- * Advocate for professional learning;
- * Are strategic around the allocation of resources; and
- * Create support systems and structures essential to effective professional learning practice.

Winners of the award are the educators from **Santa Fe, Clear Creek, Friendswood, and Galveston (Texas) school systems**, who are participating in the Galveston County Learning Leaders Initiative. These educators demonstrate that vertical and horizontal leadership teams are building better systems of professional learning for all.

Resources: We know that, for professional learning to be effective, we must prioritize, monitor, and coordinate resources. Those resources include time, technology, and personnel as well as dollars. Educators must make tough decisions, and this standard guides us in how to do that. The recipient of this award, Murray Hill Academy in New York City, was a finalist in the Agents for Learning challenge last summer. Educators at the school demonstrated powerful ways to allocate resources to provide the professional learning time and support teachers so desperately need and want.

Data: The Data standard represents the use of student, educator, and systems data to guide the planning and assessment of professional learning. There were many possible recipients of this award, and high among them were the districts participating in Learning Forward's Redesign PD Community of Practice. The award went to the team from Washington, D.C., for embedding data-driven decision making in the new cycle of its LEAP program and leveraging it to guide key professional learning decisions. The LEAP

program, which stands for Learning together to Advance our Practice, is working to shift professional learning in DC schools toward a clear objective of coherence and relevance.

Learning Designs: The Learning Designs standard focuses on adult learning and the importance of embedding attention to learning theories, research, and models in our learning designs. Winner of this award is the Consortium of Education Partners in British Columbia, which includes boards, business officials, superintendents, principals and vice principals, teachers, and independent schools, for its support of Learning Forward's just-released study, *The State of Educators' Professional Learning in Canada*, as well as the many innovations introduced at the annual conference.

Implementation: Too often, implementation is overlooked in discussions of professional learning. And yet we all know that when we fail to address what is essential for implementation, our initial steps in learning never take hold. When it comes to exemplifying implementation, it is instructional coaches who are on the front lines of supporting great teaching. This award goes to all instructional coaches. We recognize you for supporting and modeling great practice and documenting the impact of your work on your colleagues and their students.

Outcomes: We know that the most helpful professional learning is driven by the information we have on what students need to know and do. From there, we can backward map to determine the same needs for educators. The Outcomes standard elevates the importance of aligning and measuring the outcomes of our professional learning efforts. Winner of the award is Maureen Dockendorf and her team for their work on CR4YR (Changing Results for Young Readers), an example of effective professional learning highlighted in the just-released study of professional learning in Canada.

Those are the winners of the first Learnies awards. We encourage all of you to continue doing great work to leverage the Standards for Professional Learning to advance effective professional learning for educators. Let us know about the work you are doing. Who knows? You may be selected for recognition next year.