

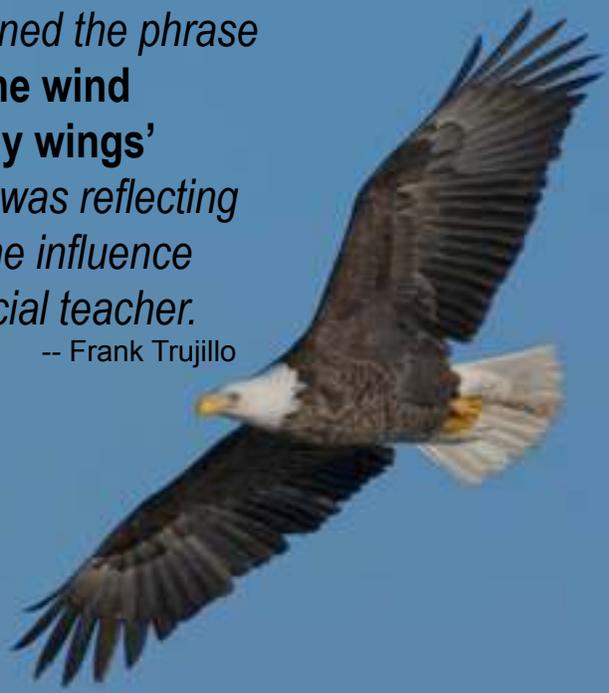
KS Direct Connection

LEARNING
FORWARD
KANSAS

DEC. 2013



*Whoever first coined the phrase
‘You’re the wind
beneath my wings’
most assuredly was reflecting
on the sublime influence
of a very special teacher.*
-- Frank Trujillo



Standards for Professional Learning

The Details and the Direction are in the Data

By Vicki Bechard
LF KS Secretary

“Wanted! Meaningful Data”:
Is this request something that might be seen or heard in Kansas schools? Is data something your district/building utilizes on a regular basis or just something you collect, report, and/or save?

Most likely, there isn’t a school in Kansas that doesn’t have **more than enough data**. The problem therein, lies not in the collection, but in the use of the data we have collected. And just how can data be used? The goal of data is:

- to determine areas of strength and teaching and learning needs;

- to focus building and district goals and professional learning goals; and
- to provide evidence of implementation, effectiveness, or progress.

Data drives the dialogue – or it should if you are concerned about focusing on effective implementation – Data drives the dialogue around why change is needed; how we will achieve the desired changes; and what those changes will look like.

The **Data** Standard for Professional Learning summarizes in this way: *Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources*

and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.
(Learning Forward publications)

Why data? Using multiple sources
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Looking for the Perfect Holiday Gift?

Give the gift of knowledge, new ideas, and professional networking

Gift a membership to Learning Forward Kansas
to a colleague or pre-service educator

Click the membership tab on the [LF KS website](http://www.learningforward.org) to get started. No wrapping required!

Data-Driven Instruction Makes a Difference

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of data enriches the decision making process by providing evidence of what we think we know, perspective, and balance. When we rely on a narrow scope of evidence (ex: just high stakes testing to determine effectiveness) we don't see the whole picture. What details would we miss if we just looked at whole school or whole class data or at only one type of data? What we uncover in our analysis of the data provides us the necessary details to determine the direction for our goals and actions.

Learning Forward Beliefs, Mission, and Standards

Learning Forward Beliefs

- Effective professional learning is fundamental to student learning.
- All educators have an obligation to improve their practice.
- More students achieve when educators assume collective responsibility for student learning.
- Successful leaders create and sustain a culture of learning.
- Improving student learning and professional practice requires ongoing systemic and organizational change.

Learning Forward Mission

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

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Communities
Leadership
Resources
Data
Learning Designs
Implementation
Outcomes

Check [Learning Forward website](#) for further information.

What data should I use?

Improving student achievement or performance is the goal of every action that a school makes. Analyzing data is like putting together a puzzle so that every piece leads to a meaningful picture, but by itself, doesn't reveal nearly enough information. So the data that gives us the broadest picture and supports student achievement must be part of the puzzle.

Building performance data is certainly one piece of the puzzle, but so is classroom data (both formal and informal), as well as anecdotal and perception data. Demographics provide important pieces of the puzzle, too. But isn't professional learning also part of that puzzle?

- What is it that teachers know and can do that leads to improved student performance?
- What strategies have we learned?
- How are we implementing targeted strategies? Have they worked? How do we know?

Tying professional learning to student performance is a proven way to achieve building goals, but is often not efficiently supported during implementation and seldom measured for effectiveness.

How should we use the data? When presenting data to staff (or parents or the Board of Education), begin by letting them ask questions about what they see (or don't see). Questioning is a great strategy to use to drill down to find the root cause. By reframing our thoughts to questions instead of statements or opinions, we are able to have one question lead to another, and suddenly a pattern may emerge, or something appears that needs to be commended or addressed.

- Analyzing data can reveal pockets of excellence, or effective practices that should be celebrated and could be duplicated to support other areas of need.
- Analyzing data can also reveal gaps



in implementation or support, whether that includes resources or time.

- Analyzing data that leads to ownership and productivity works best in collaborative conversations rather than whole group presentations.
- Analyzing data is an integral part of assessing progress and effectiveness. We do this regularly for students, but are just now moving in this direction for the educators in the building. No longer will evaluation systems resemble a "grade card", but rather be a measure of growth and effective implementation.
- Analyzing data should also be directed at professional learning opportunities for their effectiveness, timeliness, relationship to building or district goals, and improved performance in the classroom.

Ultimately the question becomes:

What are we doing and is it working? As noted in the Learning Forward materials "Changes at the student and educator levels are best sustained when school and system-level learning occur simultaneously." Data analysis is done to change or determine policies, practices, calendar creation, allocation of time and resources, to make personnel decisions, and other building or district practices that directly impact teaching and learning. Finding ways to sync the data dialogue occurring at all levels of the school or district will produce the best results.

Wanted: Data-driven dialogue that focuses decisions and actions that lead to desired results! [DC](#)

LF KS Learning Conference

Resolve Now to 'Move foRwaRd' in Learning, Networking in 2014

By Jo McFadden
2014 Learning Conference Chair

Does Professional Learning Matter?

Stephanie Hirsh, Executive Director of Learning Forward, will share how professional learning makes a difference for student learning when she presents the keynote address at the 2014 LF KS Learning Conference. Hirsh will also examine some typical barriers to standards-driven professional learning, and will offer strategies for building a case to support professional learning.

Hirsh's address will set the tone for the 2014 Learning Conference, titled *moving foRwaRd with leaRning foRwaRd kansas*. Her presentation on professional learning will begin the journey toward an in-depth look at how the 5 R's (Rigor, Relevance, Relationships, Rapport, Respect) build a foundation for instruction based on the Kansas College and Career Ready standards (KCCRS).

Sessions at the conference, to be held **April 8-9 in Topeka**, will focus on strategies for educators at all levels: pre-service teachers, classroom teachers, support teachers, coaches, building and district administrators. A few of the topics to be covered include:

- Next Generation Science Standards
- Confessions of a Math Phobe - Math

Practices that Work

- New Teaching Practices for New Literacies

In addition to her keynote address, Hirsh will also facilitate two breakout sessions focused on professional learning. "Standards-based Professional Learning" will examine data that measures the quality of professional learning educators are experiencing. "Assessing the Impact of Professional Learning" will review strategies for measuring impact as well as determine which strategies to employ depending on the outcomes and the constituents for the information.

Before her appointment as executive director of Learning Forward, Hirsh served as deputy executive director for 18 years. Her recent books include *A Playbook for Professional Learning*, co-authored with Shirley Hord, and *The Learning Educator*, co-authored with Joellen Killion,

Program and registration information for the 2014 Conference will be available on the [LF KS website](#) in January. Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding of how to implement KCCRS, to network with Kansas educators, and to be a part of *moving foRwaRd with leaRning foRwaRd kansas*.
DC

Calendar Countdown



LF KS 2014 Learning Conference

April 8-9, 2014
Ramada Inn
Topeka, KS

Rigor and Relevance: Preparing Students to be College and Career Ready

A Day with Dr. Bill Daggett
September 29, 2014
Doubletree by Hilton
Wichita, KS
Register with SWPRSC
800-728-1022

Surf on over...

to the **LF KS Facebook** page.
"Like" us to stay updated on news 24/7.

Link up at
www.learningforwardkansas.org



Sticky Standards...

Professional Learning
That Sticks

A [website](#) that includes podcasts and other great resources on professional

Getting Organized Helps Eliminate the ‘Dip’ of December

By Jill Bergerhofer
Representative B East of Hwy 281

According to the *Phases of First Year Teaching* shared in the last edition of *Direct Connection*, this time of year is typically when we start feeling the “dip” happening. One of the most challenging parts of having a successful first year, as well as an entire career, is getting a handle on organization. Even type-A folks can begin to feel challenged about staying organized. Thus, the resource for this issue of *Direct Connection*, *Becoming a “Together” Teacher*, is a transcript of a question/answer live chat, aired Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2012 by EdWeek in *Career Coach: Becoming a ‘Together Teacher’*. The chat is hosted by Maia Heyck-Merlin, a former fifth grade teacher and now the author of *The Together Teacher: Plan Ahead, Get Organized and Save Time!* It is filled with useful tips to keep yourself organized and ways to use your time as effectively as possible! You can listen to the live chat and/or access other great resources at [Maia's website](#).

Becoming a “Together Teacher”: Organizational Tips for Educators

<i>What's the most common organizational error or oversight you see teachers making?</i>	Great question, Anthony. In my experience, the most common error is not having a plan for your “flexible” time, meaning the time you have choice, and how you will use it. Most teachers have a plan for their “stuff,” and even for their supplies, but rarely do we make a proactive plan for our time!
<i>You clearly see having strong organizational skills as central to effective teaching? Why?</i>	Indeed, I do see strong “together” skills as instrumental to teaching success. The main reasons are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting the needs of your students 2. Your credibility as an educator—with families and students—Will you call back? 3. Your participation as a colleague—Will you get your shared lesson plans in? 4. Your sanity! Teaching is so darn demanding that unless you have a plan for breaks, the work is relentless.
<i>Do you have 5 or 8 best suggestions to help someone who is unorganized to get started?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a Weekly Worksheet. This tool will create a precise plan for how you will use before/ after school time, preps, lunch (if you have it), etc. Free templates are available on my website at www.thetogetherteacher.com 2. Pause to plan. Take an hour each week to clean up the week behind you and look ahead to what is coming up. 3. Consolidate your calendars. Take all of the calendars that your school or district distributes, pick ONE calendar tool (such as Google or paper-based) and enter in all deadlines for the year.
<i>How can I get better at only moving papers once when they come in during the school day?</i>	Oh, yes, the paper storm! I’ve observed super together teachers do a few things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear collection point for their students to deliver the papers, such as a vertical file on your desk or table. • Process those files at the end of the school day religiously and either 1) grade them or 2) take them home to grade. • Distribute them back to students via student mailboxes (crates for secondary students, traditional mailboxes for younger kids) – or have a student helper distribute them!
<i>Do you use any computer programs or technologies that you think help keep you organized?</i>	I have seen teachers use a few different systems—and sometimes they mix and match systems. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Google (Calendar and Task feature) 2. Outlook (Calendar and Task feature) 3. Evernote (free and awesome!) 4. Other apps, such as Toodledo or Reminders The trick here is to see what feels comfortable to you. If you are just getting into the habit of being “together,” I usually recommend you start off with paper systems and integrate technology later.
<i>What steps can administrators take to create a supportive environment for their teachers to become more organized? Can PLCs play a role in this?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a quiet work space for your teachers. There are often too many interruptions in a typical teacher’s lounge, people in and out, noise of copiers. For teachers to truly get work done at school, they need quiet! • PLCs could supply healthy snacks in refrigerators for teachers. • Administrators can ensure there is a clear, common calendar, and that e-mail is minimized.

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Take a Tip...

Organization of Time, Materials Increases Teacher Effectiveness

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<p>Many people (myself included) have mixed success with to-do lists, but you are an advocate. Why? What do most people do wrong in making lists, in your experience?</p>	<p>I'm a huge fan of to-do lists (Upcoming To-Do List, per my book) because often times, there are things that don't go on our calendars because they don't have "hard" deadlines, such as "re-organize classroom library." This to-do needs a place to live so it is not lost. Once a week, I advise teachers look at their Upcoming To-Do lists and then slot things into actual slots of time.</p> <p>If you organize your to-do list correctly, it is what I call "strategic procrastination"—in the very best sense</p>
<p>Do you think that teachers of different subjects/grades require different skills? Or is it all the same whether you're teaching elementary or high school, math or English, etc.?</p>	<p>In general, we all need the same baseline set of skills: prioritization, planning, efficiency, organization, and strong execution... However...</p> <p>There are a few positions that I have seen require an EXTRA boost of organization, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers who deal with supplies (art, science, PE, music). 2. Mobile teachers who teach from carts. 3. Special educators who have a huge amount of paperwork.
<p>What would be your #1 advice for a 1st year teacher?</p>	<p>Knowing just how hard the first year can be (I routinely worked 80+ hour weeks.), I recommend you determine when you are NOT going to be working and hold that time sacred. Burn-out is very real.</p>
<p>On the subject of technology, you suggest in your book that technology (particularly e-mail) can make teachers feel even more overwhelmed. What's your advice on handling the deluge of info teachers get these days?</p>	<p>E-mail is particularly hard for teachers because if we are doing our jobs well, we are not in front of our computers much during the day! What most of us end up doing is semi-checking all day long on our smartphones, but actually never doing anything about it because our students are coming in the door! I recommend picking two to three times per day to check AND DEAL WITH your e-mail, and then one longer time for anything that takes more than two minutes.</p>
<p>How can a teacher (who is semi-organized) help colleagues with their organizational challenges?</p>	<p>Modeling obviously helps, and being willing to teach the skills in a flexible way. If you are in a teacher-leader role, having detailed grade level/department agendas and notes and clear shared calendars helps. In my experience, most people don't want to be unorganized; they just don't know how to get there.</p>
<p>How can teachers show their supervisors and administrators that they're organized?</p>	<p>There are a few ways to show your leaders you are organized:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to meeting deadlines. 2. Proactive planning to achieve goals (such as making project plans for field trips). 3. Leading organized meetings or committees.
<p>How do I keep track of the folders students are supposed to take home every night and bring back – but so few of them do? It turns into a huge waste of time checking through everything and sending it back again and again.</p>	<p>Some of this depends on the age of your students, but here is what I have seen work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the folder has two pockets labeled "Bring Back to School" and "Stay at Home." We show a model of this in our CBS interview (posted on our blog at www.thetogetherteacher.com). • Number your students and ensure that number is on your folder. Have one student collect everything in a crate in the morning to check and see if everything is there. • Train your students' families on your system. We have a few great letters home to parent samples on our blog.
<p>I'm trying to organize some of my paper (meeting notes, admin papers, record keeping) into binders this year. Do you have some suggestions for me?</p>	<p>Many of us are drowning in it. First things first:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recycle anything you can. Be brutal. Spend a few hours just tossing stuff. 2. Determine what you absolutely have to keep that you don't have a soft file of somewhere. 3. Invest in or use your school's copier as a scanner and turn as much as you can to PDFs to save on your computer or in the cloud. <p>After that, with the very minimal amount of paper you have left, create binders or file folders (takes less time than hole-punching) with clear labels</p>
<p>I liked your ideas about the "thought catcher". Can you explain what that is and why it's important for teachers?</p>	<p>Thought Catchers are places to "catch your thoughts" for later. Too often, we scrawl field trip ideas, summer reading list brainstorm, and ideas for the next staff meeting on whatever piece of paper we have in front of us – or just leave it in our brains.</p> <p>If we take the time to organize those thoughts in ways that we can easily refer back to later, it saves so much time...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...meeting agendas created. ...memos half-written. ...parent communications started.

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Take a Tip...

Organization of Time, Materials Increases Teacher Effectiveness

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<p>So how do you organize those stray ideas? What's the best framework for that?</p>	<p>The simplest way to organize your thoughts is to create Thought Catchers (free templates available at www.thetogetherteacher.com). Thought Catchers are nothing more than boxes with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleague names—to record brainstorm for colleagues • Team or department names—to record thoughts for meetings • Future ideas—to gather ideas for the future <p>Then, when we are pushed back to review the thoughts through a meeting with someone or a memo we have to write, they are all in one place for us! This sure beats having the scraps of paper scattered around!</p>
<p>My closet looks great now, but in two months I'm sure I won't even be able to get in it. Help!</p>	<p>I just helped a teacher with 13 years' worth of supplies—so I get this!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start by getting rid of anything you don't need (I always say this!). Be BRUTAL! 2. Ensure you have clear labels for every portion of your closet. 3. Train a student to help you put things away. 4. Keep a box outside the closet of "things to reshelve" so you are not tempted to stuff things.
<p>You talk about organizing your time and your classroom, but what about your office (or lack thereof) at home? How would you address the home office? Is it the same organizational tools or is it different?</p>	<p>It depends on where you are doing your "teacher work." If you are indeed taking some home (and most of us do!) and space is limited, I suggest creating a "teacher basket" that has duplicates of all your necessary pens for grading, staplers, hole punchers, etc. so you can move it around the house if needed.</p>
<p>In your book you emphasize the importance of setting classroom routines. What are the keys to doing this?</p>	<p>So in the case of area of expertise, I'm not talking about student routines, but rather routines for YOU! Given the fast-paced and unpredictable nature of teachers' lives, I recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking time to batch process routine weekly items, e.g. when do you copy all papers, when do you grade, plan. • Setting clear morning and afternoon routines for what you do when you arrive and depart each day. • Picking one time per week to plan for the next week. <p>We have a blog post going live next week that shows a photograph of a teacher's posted morning/afternoon routines. She says it completely minimized stress and added efficiency.</p>
<p>I need suggestions for myself as a traveling teaching of five rooms one being a lab which I must maintain supplies..., just keeping things flowing.</p>	<p>This is definitely a tough situation, and I hope you have cart—or some large tote bags or backpacks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have a clear method of transport (see above!). • Invest in duplicates of key items to stay stored in the various classrooms hidden away. • Have a student helper get you prepped to move around. <p>I just interviewed a teacher in San Jose who teaches math from a cafeteria stage, and photos of her systems are posted on 9/21 (Friday) on our blog.</p>
<p>Discipline is a crucial factor in staying organized. What advice do you have for teachers with a busy home life or who feel tired at the end of the day?</p>	<p>In general, I advise using your preps (if you have them) to get as much done at school as possible. If you do have to take work home, pick a short period at night when you will do it. Try to define the work in advance of getting home.</p>
<p>But how do you keep some space between work and home? At least a little...and it's easy to forget stuff at home or school when you drag work back and forth.</p>	<p>We all definitely need space between our demanding jobs and home lives. To ensure you don't forget what you need in either place, we recommend having a very organized and dedicated "teacher bag." If you check out our Pinterest boards (search 'Together Teacher'), you will see a few methods for transport we featured last week. In our experience, the labeled accordion file is key!</p>

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Weigh In: What's the Most Effective Professional Development for New Teachers?

By Jill Bergerhofer
Representative B East of Hwy 281

I recently had a brief conversation on providing professional development for new teachers with the principal of my son’s high school. Pete’s concern is that even though teachers may be hired early in the summer before the start of the new school year, he doesn’t have them to work with until their “official” start date, which is about a week and a half before students report. As would be expected, these new teachers spend all summer preparing for their students. However, as Pete pointed out, when he does finally meet with them there is always information that makes much of their hard work unusable and they must scramble to regroup and redesign plans. Additionally, there are so many practices and organizational structures new teachers must learn, yet very little professional development time is available to meet with the new teachers once students are back and school is off and running. Pete has reason to be concerned; the numbers are staggering. Carol Patton’s article *Weigh In: What's the Most Effective PD for New Teachers?* weighs in on these statistics –



- **1,498:** The number of teachers who decide to leave the profession every day;
- **42.9:** The percentage of teachers citing “personal life factors” as why they left teaching.

Patton’s article summarizes conversations she had with district leaders on what they have found to get the “most bang for their buck” when providing professional development for new teachers. Mentoring programs topped the list. A brief description of mentoring programs in these leaders’ districts includes:

- **Seven Steps** – a year-long professional training and induction for new teachers. Every month, teachers attend a two- to three-hour seminar.
- **Discipline Issues** – “Every new teacher receives a mentor for one year...We have them meet in the summer. Each teacher gets two days with their mentor to go over things like how to do lesson plans, how to take attendance, and so on. Then, once school starts, they spend one hour a week with their mentor and an additional 25 hours throughout the semester”.
- **Start Right** – “We have a very significant induction program in our district...The main reason this is so valuable is because it’s embedded, on-the-job professional development for our teachers...Every nine-week instructional coach program...We identified new teachers in some of our high-poverty schools to have a retired teacher work alongside them”.

[Click here](#) for Patton’s complete article.

Other resources for support and keeping new teachers from becoming a statistic that school and district leaders might want to check out include:

- [Teachers Teaching Teachers: Professional Development That Works](#)
- [Professional Development](#)
- [New report](#) finds teachers need more effective professional development to meet higher standards.
- [The Good Mentor: What it Takes to be Effective](#)
- [Mentoring Beginning Teachers](#) DC

Take a Tip...

Organization of Time, Materials Increases Teacher Effectiveness

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<p>What would you say an unorganized teacher looks like?</p>	<p>We all have our own images (and nightmares!) of being unorganized. For many of us, it looks like...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being late (gulp) never returning student work. • Making copies at the last minute. • Turning around to fumble at your desk for supplies in the middle of teaching. • Having to rewrite last year’s lesson plans because you didn’t save yours to just improve. • Having items fall on your head when you open the supply closet. <p>Whether it is stuff, time, or papers, there are many ways to be unorganized. Our book tries to hit on all aspects of organization, but you can implement one thing at a time!</p>
<p>For a teacher who’s feeling overwhelmed and unorganized at this time of year, what approach do you advise? How should he or she start to think about these issues? Getting organized isn’t something you can do all at once, right?</p>	<p>I often say getting “together” is sort of like getting “healthy.” If you tried to go to the gym seven days per week, eliminate all fat, etc., you would never follow-through.</p> <p>I recommend going bit-by-bit and tackling whichever aspect you need most first, whether it is paper management, classroom organization, e-mail control, or time management, and then making a six-month plan. The journey of “togetherness” can take over a year – and we all need tune-ups now and again. We have some samples in the conclusion of the book, and many teachers read one chapter per month as part of PD/self-study. DC</p>

Book Review

'Star Teachers' Offers Insight Into Interviewing, Selecting Effective Teachers

By Jo McFadden
Principal Representative

Star Teachers: The Ideology and Best Practice of Effective Teachers of Diverse Children and Youth in Poverty, written by Dr. Martin Haberman, addresses the need to select, train and retain quality teachers to teach diverse children in poverty. The book is divided into three parts.

Part one of *Star Teachers* deals with the causes of teacher shortage, history of teacher education, rationale for recruiting and preparing teachers, working conditions and securing teachers. Haberman notes several factors contribute to the shortage of teachers:

- The length of an average teaching career is now 11 years.
- The majority of graduates from traditional education programs never take jobs as teachers.



- Beginners take jobs and fail or leave due to lack of training and support.
- There is a shortage of special education teachers.
- There are greater entrance level career opportunities available to women outside of teaching.
- Graduates of color have greater access into a larger number of careers.

Haberman also explains it is necessary to recognize the conditions under which new teachers work. The five conditions

that need consideration are: salaries, safety, class size, principals and testing. Given these factors, Haberman concludes with the point that securing the teachers needed for the real world will require new forms of teacher education with new procedures and strategies.

Part two of *Star Teachers* contrasts traditional urban teaching practices with what good teaching should include. Haberman says there are three reasons why improving the quality of teaching fails. First, we assume we know what teaching is, that we are discussing the same thing when we use the word teaching and that we would all know good teaching if we saw it. Second, we believe that most teachers cannot be changed; therefore we use teacher-proof strategies for changing schools instead of improving teaching. Third, we don't bother with teaching if research shows that the achievement test scores of poor

and minority youngsters are affected primarily by their socioeconomic class and ethnicity.

Haberman believes there is a core of teaching acts that defines the pedagogy of star urban teachers:

- Students are involved with issues they regard as vital concerns.
- Students are involved with explanations of human differences.
- Students are being helped to see major concepts, big ideas, and general principles and not isolated facts.

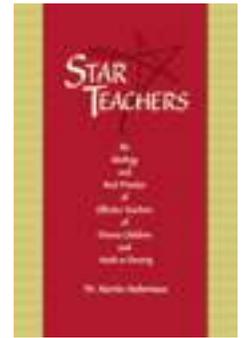
- Students are involved in planning what they will be doing.
- Students are involved with applying ideals such as fairness, equity, or justice to their world.
- Students are directly involved in real-life experiences.
- Students are actively involved in heterogeneous groups.
- Students are asked to think about an idea in a way that questions common sense or an assumption accepted by everyone.
- Teachers involve students with the technology of information access.
- Students are involved in reflecting upon their own lives and how they have come to believe and feel as they do.

Part two concludes with Haberman defining the culture of urban schools as unemployment training. He refers to it as the ideology of non-work learned by the students in urban schools. He says the solution is for schools to stop doing all the things that reward and reinforce the ideology of non-work and substitute rewards for students who show effort, persist at learning higher order skills, work cooperatively and relate to each other in non-authoritarian ways.

Part three, the largest portion of *Star Teachers*, examines the characteristics of a "star" teacher. Haberman gives examples of how star teachers think about teaching and how they transform these ideas into action and effective teaching. Star teachers believe their students are not only as smart as they are, but are more likely to learn more in the future than their teachers know now. This leads the teachers to respond in ways which are not only respectful, but highly motivational.

The next portion of the *Star Teachers* describes a number of measurable and non-measurable attributes and principles of "star" teachers. Some examples of these attributes include:

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KLFA Continues Commitment to Advocacy for Public Education

Kansas Learning First Alliance (KLFA) continues its work for public education. The fall meeting began with a legislative update from Karen Godfrey (KNEA), Tom Krebs (KASB), and Cheryl Semmel (USA) that highlighted the need to get accurate information about education to legislators and communities. There is a concerted effort to undermine the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards (KCCRS) and adequate funding for all public schools. It is critical that legislators and community members visit schools and see the great work being done. A number of powerful resources for advocating for public schools and current initiatives were shared: [Protect Kansas Schools](#), [KCCRS Toolkit](#), and [FHSU Docking Institute for Public Policy](#).

Several members gathered prior to the meeting for a quick tutorial on setting up a Twitter account. Social media can connect our members to students and the broader world, and information can be shared quickly and effectively. Members shared tips on how to make these tools work as we advocate for strong public education. [Google Moderator](#) was introduced as a tool to facilitate online conversations.

Members furthered the conversation in small collaborative groups. They focused on how to share KLFA resources and how to involve members of our organizations and communities in supporting schools. The wrap-up conversation acknowledged the usefulness of social media, but also stressed value of other avenues: PSAs, radio, in-person presentations, and brochures in community offices.

Future meeting dates are Jan 9 at the KNEA building, April 9, and May 15 (webinar). Please visit [KLFA Website](#) for more information. DC

Celebrate the Best in Professional Learning

By Ben Smith
Awards Team Chair

As we get closer to the end of the year, it is important to keep in mind that January 15, 2014 is the deadline for nominations for the seven Learning Forward Kansas awards. To nominate individuals or districts, please visit the awards page of the LF KS [website](#).

Here, you will find a description of the awards with a link to the nomination forms. Please look over these nomination documents in order to provide yourself plenty of time to complete the process. Completed nominations, with any evidence used as supporting documentation, need to be sent to:

Ben Smith
Learning Forward Kansas Awards Chair
1300 N Cedar
Abilene KS, 67410

The nomination categories are as follows:

- Cycle of Continuous Improvement Award
- Classified Professional Learning Award
- Impact Award
- Professional Learning Community Award
- Systemic Learning Award
- 21st Century Skills Professional Development Award
- District Staff Developer of the Year Award



A brief description of the awards can also be found in the awards section of the LF KS [website](#).

Recognizing staff for the hard work they do is a great way to promote positive professional relationships and to create a climate where higher levels of student responsibility and learning can occur. Please make sure to have your nominations in by January 15. DC

'Star Teachers' Addresses Need to Select, Retain Quality Teachers

continued from page 8

- "Stars" are obsessed with generating effort.
- "Star" teachers have extraordinary organizational skills.
- "Stars" interact with children as if the purpose of any activity is to get the students to do the work – speaking, questioning, finding out, writing, measuring, or constructing- while the teacher's job is to serve as a facilitator, coach and resource to the students.
- "Stars" don't plan by focusing on what they will be doing, but on what the students will be doing.
- "Stars" know that when they are able to motivate students that learning skyrockets and teaching becomes less stressful.
- "Stars" seek to create students who will be independent and not need them.
- "Stars" frequently model the acceptance of mistakes and on occasion use it as a teachable moment.

This part of the book is very positive, it offers hope for teachers. It points out that teachers are not born with exceptional skills, rather that they have to develop and refine their skills through a continuous process of reflection and trial and error. Just like effective learning, teaching results are directly proportional to the amount of effort put into the process.

In conclusion, *Star Teachers* is strongly recommended for educators in every discipline since it details how and why professionals manage to educate students according to principles that we know to be effective. It makes the important point that teaching to the test is not effective, and the best way to get students through the high stakes demands is to motivate them through project-based, student-centered learning, "empowering students in decision making and engaging them in learning activities." DC

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