



**The Virginia Staff Development Council  
Annual Conference**  
**October 29, 2010**  
**Zehmer Hall**  
**University of Virginia**  
**Charlottesville, VA**

Stephanie Hirsh, Executive Director of Learning Forward, opened our annual conference by explaining National Staff Development's new name. Learning Forward, formerly the National Staff Development Council, is an international association of learning educators committed to one purpose in K-12 education: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so that every student achieves.

The Virginia Staff Development Council, Learning Forward Virginia, designed their conference to identify the core elements of a learning school that engages in collaborative professional learning and to have participants gain strategies for transforming schools into learning schools.

Each registrant received the book, *Becoming a Learning School*, which was used throughout Dr. Hirsh's presentation and during the afternoon breakout sessions. Dr. Hirsh first had participants look at the definition of professional learning by using case studies, then reading the rationale and research concerning the definition, and next watching a video of a school team implementing the definition. Tools available on the CD accompanying the book were used throughout the conference to aid educators in understanding the definition and implementation of the definition with schools.

Dr. Hirsh also shared several resources available from the Learning Forward web site that illustrated the professional learning definition in action. All of these resources are free to members to share with their school teams. One resource is the T3 newsletter written for teachers and other educators. In the September newsletter, Stephanie Hirsh wrote about what collective responsibility is and what it looks and sounds like in schools. She stated that "the most important phase in Learning Forward's definition of professional learning is collective responsibility". School-wide and team-based professional learning embedded in the daily work of educators is essential when professionals commit to sharing responsibility for the success of all students. Establishing collective responsibility is not easy, but it is how we achieve success for every student in every school.

Afternoon sessions helped registrants to extend and refine their current work to increase impact on student achievement and to clarify roles in a learning school. Barriers to collaborative professional learning were also addressed. Participants ended the afternoon looking at Innovation Configuration maps to assist with their planning and assessment of collaborative professional learning. Next steps (Keep the Learning moving Forward) will be planned by Board members and Regional Representatives to provide further assistance and support. Regional Representatives will address questions posed by registrants from their respective regions. These questions were gathered at the end of the afternoon sessions.