President’s Message: What’s Data Got to Do With It?

The current focus of teachers preparing report cards, administrators reflecting on school growth plans, and central office folks supporting staff and planning for the next school year leaves me to ponder the role of using ‘data’ for each of these groups. What is the EVIDENCE of the impact of our work as teachers, administrators and central office, on student learning?

How are we using information/evidence in guiding our decisions about reporting, school growth plans, and district goals? How are we utilizing this data to inform next steps in instruction, goal setting, and in professional learning?

In January 2013, Learning Forward BC sponsored a session Got Data Now What? Creating and Leading Cultures of Inquiry, facilitated by Bruce Wellman. Our website [http://learningforwardbc.com] has a summary of this event.

Several districts have taken us up on our offer of facilitating up to two touchback sessions, the purpose of which has been to model ongoing professional learning by facilitating processes that afford participants the opportunity to reflect on what they are learning, and share what they are trying in their various contexts.

A valuable take away from these sessions has been that much of what we talk about in regard to data, is impacted by perspective, and that we must provide opportunities for folks to engage in focused conversations in order to surface points of view, and develop common meaning and purpose, in order to use information effectively.

Building networks is an important purpose of Learning Forward BC. Learning from structured sessions with strategies and tools that can be used by participants, and learning from shared stories, are a bonus of our touchback sessions and our network dinners. We encourage all members to find ways to be involved in our ongoing sessions.

Please check our website for dates of our events.