



2019

# SPOTLIGHTING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION

It's hard to believe that this is the third iteration of the Carnegie Foundation's Annual Spotlight on Quality in Continuous Improvement. We first started this program in 2017 to provide examples of high-quality improvement work in practice in order to inspire educational leaders who are new to improvement, support those who are engaged in improvement work and want to get better at it, and celebrate and learn from those who are making real progress. The success of Spotlight has exceeded my expectations.

The work being done by this year's Spotlight recipients surfaces what I believe is the critical lever for scaling continuous improvement in education—infrastructure. Improvement infrastructure in education refers to a myriad of organizations and institutions in this country and across the world that support schools and their improvement. It includes school districts and charter management organizations; colleges and universities; for-profit companies and non-profit organizations; and regional, state, and federal agencies. This year's Spotlight program demonstrates that this vast system of supports for schools and communities can be greatly improved through the use of high-quality continuous improvement principles and processes.

Evidence is growing that a strong improvement infrastructure in education can dramatically reduce longstanding inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes, which is at the heart of the Carnegie Foundation's mission. This year's Spotlight honorees have embedded improvement science-based approaches within their system of supports to schools and school systems in order to better advance tangible progress for students and families. Through this improvement infrastructure, educators are solving problems rather than just implementing more new programs, enabling systems change rather than enacting disconnected solutions, and engaging in ongoing cycles of inquiry and learning as they seek to continuously improve.

Thank you for engaging with the 2019 Spotlight program. We hope that you find the work presented to be educative and that it helps support your improvement journey.

**Anthony S. Bryk**  
*President*  
*Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*

# THE 2019 HONOREES

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## LITERACY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

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The Literacy Design Collaborative seeks to improve school instruction by utilizing improvement science principles. LDC engages with a variety of stakeholders and systems—states, districts, professional and academic organizations, schools, and teachers—to develop skilled educators equipped to support all learners. LDC aims to improve standards-driven instruction in every discipline at every grade level, K–12.

LDC is spotlighted for its use of disciplined inquiry processes to test and refine the core elements of their program design. This approach allows it to leverage its digital delivery platform to rapidly test user-centered prototypes for program design and implementation guided by evidence of the relative impact of these approaches on student learning. LDC’s digital, analytic infrastructure enabled it to transform from a face-to-face professional development program focused on individual teachers to a strategic, tech-enabled systems approach for school and district leaders to use in their efforts to diagnose and strengthen literacy practices across instructional systems.

## NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

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The Northwest Regional Education Service District is the largest of Oregon’s 19 education service districts. NWRESD works with school districts in the four counties it serves to deliver quality, cost-effective programs and services, including special education, technology, professional development and school improvement.

NWRESD was selected as a 2019 Spotlight honoree because of its efforts to enhance interagency collaboration to make measurable improvement on a state-level education policy priority. Specifically, NWRESD collaborated with its schools to establish

a common improvement aim, analyze underlying causes of low success rates, and devise interventions intended to advance more equitable 9th-grade classroom performance and eventual high school graduation. NWRESD developed an infrastructure that enabled coordination of school improvement teams and their leaders; social connections and relational trust in and among teams spanning multiple districts; data systems to provide both quantitative and qualitative evidence of students’ educational experience and outcomes; and the common use of a standard set of on-track measures to assess progress.

## QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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The Queensland Department of Education (Australia) oversees the learning outcomes of more than a half million full-time students enrolled in 1,241 state schools situated in seven geographic education regions. Triggered by low performance in 2008, its statewide improvement approach dramatically transformed the nature of instruction and has achieved compelling improvements in student outcomes, most significantly for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Queensland Department of Education is spotlighted for its impactful 10-year improvement journey. Its intentional development of system leaders across regions and schools to support quality in its continuous improvement efforts has (1) used data to inform and align its decision making and improvement efforts from the central office to the classroom, (2) developed and refined a School Improvement Model that defines the roles and practices for all teachers and leaders, and (3) cultivated the professional communities that support schools to learn from each other as they move toward better quality outcomes in their respective contexts and for their particular student populations.

A decorative grid on the left side of the page, consisting of a 10x5 grid of squares. Some squares are filled with colors: a light blue square at (row 2, col 3), an orange square at (row 4, col 2), a light green square at (row 4, col 3), a teal square at (row 5, col 1), a light green square at (row 5, col 4), a yellow square at (row 6, col 4), a teal square at (row 7, col 2), a light green square at (row 7, col 1), and an orange square at (row 9, col 5).

## THE SPOTLIGHT STORY

### OUR MISSION:

*The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching aims to build a field around the use of improvement science and networked improvement communities to solve long-standing inequities in educational outcomes.*

In pursuit of its mission, the Carnegie Foundation launched the Spotlight on Quality in Continuous Improvement program in 2017 to elevate clear and compelling examples of how the rigorous application of improvement principles, methods, processes, and tools solve educational problems. The Spotlight program provides educational organizations and improvement networks with the opportunity to learn about excellence in continuous improvement, assess their own progress, gain access to resources and education that support improvement, and be recognized for their proven quality practices within the field of education.

The three spotlight honorees for 2019 were selected from a large and diverse group of applicants who have been implementing a wide range of improvement work in varying contexts and stages of development. Each honoree has demonstrated quality in the enactment of an improvement approach to address significant problems in education or to transform their educational systems or organizations. These Spotlight honorees exemplify an emergent improvement infrastructure in the United States and around the world that is using new tools and approaches grounded in improvement science to reduce educational inequality. Their work will be presented at the Spotlight on Quality Symposium on November 21, 2019, and at Carnegie's Summit on Improvement in Education on April 1–3, 2020.

### KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SPOTLIGHT ON QUALITY PROGRAM

**Standards for early stage to more mature efforts:** These standards provide an organization's leadership with the tools to assess their progress and areas of potential growth.

**Self-study guides, tools, resources, and educative cases:** Providing best practices—along with rich, descriptive accounts and educative cases—sends consistent signals to the field about what high quality looks like in practice.

**Spotlight on Quality Symposium:** This annual event showcases exemplary work and celebrates quality in the enactment of improvement principles.

**Professional network of Spotlight on Quality leaders:** This work cultivates and supports a professional network of honorees to further deeper engagement and shared learning.

# HONOREE BIOGRAPHIES

## LITERACY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

### **Suzanne Simons, Chief Academic Officer**

For decades, the focus of Suzanne Simons work has been on building sustainable equity across public educational systems to ensure access for all students. At LDC, Simons oversees the design, delivery, and quality of LDC's resources, tools, and professional supports. Previously, Simons ran turnaround partnerships for the American Reading Company and worked in both higher education and P-K-12 systems. She sits on the Board of Trustees and the Pepper Council of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia's Read by 4th Leadership Council, and the boards of Scholar's Promise and the Benjamin and Fredora Wolf Memorial Foundation. Simons received an Ed.L.D. in educational leadership from the University of Pennsylvania.

### **Chad Vignola, Executive Director**

Chad Vignola has worked in public education and public service for more than 30 years. This includes spinning off LDC from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's primary Common Core implementation strategy into a national continuous improvement edtech hub for innovation and school transformation that effectively delivers and measures rigorous instructional classroom practice. Prior to joining LDC, Vignola served as Vice President at New Visions for Public Schools, Vice President at The Princeton Review, and in several senior roles in the NYC Department of Education. Vignola received a B.A. from the Wharton School, a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, and completed coursework toward an Ed.L.D. in education leadership at New York University.

## NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

### **Kimberley Ednie, Professional Learning Specialist, Co-Lead of the 9th Grade Success Network**

Kimberley Ednie has worked to advance equity by leading teams in the design and implementation of innovative and inclusive solutions for increasing opportunities for students. She taught reading and writing at Hunter College in Queens, NY, where she supported first-generation college students and English language learners. She served as the first Managing Director of Programs at iMentor, led professional learning for district

leaders for the NYC Department of Education, and managed adult learning and organizational development as the Director of Talent at the Boston Teacher Residency. Ednie received a B.A. from SUNY Geneseo, an M.A. from CUNY Hunter, and an Ed.L.D. in education leadership from Harvard University.

### **Daniel Luis Ramirez, Professional Learning Specialist, Co-Lead of the 9th Grade Success Network**

At NWRESA, Daniel Luis Ramirez focuses on the intersection of culturally sustaining pedagogy, deeper learning, and continuous improvement as a way to reimagine professional learning for educators. He is also a lead mentor for the third cohort of the Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship. Throughout his career, his work has been concerned with creating more liberating, inclusive, and engaging spaces for students at the middle school, high school, and post-secondary levels of education. Ramirez served as a middle and high school teacher for 14 years in Miami, FL; Washington, DC; Springfield, OR; and Portland, OR. He received a Ph.D. in critical and sociocultural studies in education from the University of Oregon.

## QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### **Stacie Hansel, Assistant Director, General State Schools Performance**

Stacie Hansel leads teams responsible for the implementation of the Department of Education's School Improvement Model, including the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, the new Queensland Certification of Education System, and targeted initiatives to lift outcomes for students across all Queensland State Schools. Her 25-year career has taken her across Queensland as a teacher, Deputy Principal, Head of School, Director, Executive Director, and Principal. She has worked with school communities across Queensland in rural and remote locations, distance education, and small and large primary and secondary schools. Hansel was recognized for her educational leadership with an Australia Day Medal for service to State Schools. She also received a National AADES Gold Leadership award for her work with distance education leaders across Australia, a Queensland State Showcase Award for excellence, and an ACEL QLD Fellowship. As a leader, Hansel has focused on building the knowledge and capability of others to guide student and school improvement.



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