



# Turning Points

## Impact Report

August 2019

# Executive Summary

This report outlines the purpose, design and results associated with the 2018-19 delivery of The Learning Partnership's Turning Points program. The Learning Partnership (TLP) is a national charity that prepares students to thrive in a diverse, connected and changing world. The education community, policy makers, and corporate leaders all cite the need to increase the capacity for critical thinking, communication skills, solution-finding and problem-solving through our education system.

Turning Points engages students in Grades 6 to 12 to reflect on a critical event in their lives and develop an essay that describes its impact on their development and sense of self; it promotes character development, resilience and literacy among Canadian public school students through the act of written expression. In the 2018-19 school year, 10,118 students in 178 Canadian public schools participated in this program, including all Grade 7 students in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, where it is a mandated part of the curriculum.

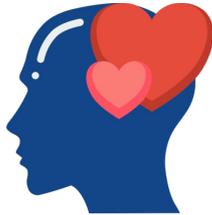
Exploring and understanding the origins and sources of one's personal values engages students in a process that is an essential part of making the transition from school to the world beyond; it helps them understand how their own personal values shape their actions and how they view themselves in the larger world.

At the culmination of the program, 72 students published their work in an annual anthology produced by The Learning Partnership, and presented their essays to an audience of their peers and parents.

# Turning Points.

## Exploring self through the written word

Turning Points engages students in Grades 6 to 12 to reflect on a critical event in their lives and develop an essay that describes its impact on their development and sense of self; the program promotes character development, resilience and literacy among students through the act of written expression. With the support of their peers and teachers, students reflect upon their values while gaining confidence in their voice and expanding their literacy skills.



HELPING STUDENTS  
EMBRACE CONFIDENCE &  
RESILIENCY.

### Our program builds these skills

- Demonstrate self-reflection and emotional intelligence;
- Demonstrate competence in writing in the form of a personal narrative;
- Demonstrate effective use of writing to work through a problem or challenge.

# Building Character.

Through a process of self-reflection and discussions with teachers and peers, students write a narrative essay about a significant event or “turning point” that had a major impact on how they view themselves and their world. As they organize and express their reflections on their values, students begin to understand that more important than the event itself is how they come to understand the impact of that event upon their attitudes, values and sense of self.

Turning Points supports and aligns with various ministries’ of education curricula expectations in literacy and character education. At the end of the program, TLP holds the Turning Points Awards Celebration, which honours students’ journeys to self-awareness and validates their own sense of purpose and drive.

“

Throughout our lives, we’re all reborn continuously as we repeatedly create new selves out of our encounters with life. Every time something happens that is big enough to shake us, whether it’s bad or good, it fertilizes the self with some new learning that the self had somehow always been waiting for. And it’s out of that that your new self is born.

**Mira Kirshenbaum**

# Celebrating Student Success.

## How Essays are Assessed

Students are encouraged to submit their essays in English or French for formal evaluation, recognition and publication as part of the program's essay competition component. Submissions are reviewed by a two-tier panel of judges consisting of education students at a number of partner universities. For these emerging teachers, Turning Points provides them with valuable experience evaluating student work, one of the most difficult of their graduation requirements. Essays are also judged by community reviewers including professionals from publishing, media and business, who bring a practical and professional lens to the judging process.

Student teachers read, score and rank student essays using a rubric and a set of program criteria. Engaging future teachers in the process of evaluating the essays helps them develop their assessment skills and an appreciation of the unique perspectives of students and the issues they face.

Essays are assessed based on originality of thought, clarity of language, organizational structure, proper use of conventions such as grammar and spelling, a demonstrated understanding of a "turning point" and the impact on the reader. Students are judged against both a set of standards specific to their grade and their peers.

# Our **Impact** by the numbers.

**10,118**

Students engaged and inspired.



**236**

Educators trained to implement Turning Points in classrooms.



**178**

Schools participated in Turning Points Coast-to-Coast.



**10**

Regional Award Celebrations across Canada.



**100**

Volunteers engaged to provide project feedback.



**72**

Award recipients and published authors in the Turning Points Anthology.



“

The Turning Points program is one which I highly recommend to all teachers. I can't describe how I felt as I watched my class journey through the process of self-discovery. It became so much more than just an assignment.”

Turning Points Teacher



**Stories are powerful.  
They are a journey and  
a joining. In a tale we  
meet new places, new  
people, new ideas. And  
they become our  
places, our people, our  
ideas.**

**Jane Yolen**

Award recipients at a regional awards ceremony in Toronto (2019).

# Engaging the Community.

**“One can  
acquire  
everything in  
solitude —  
except  
character.”**

**Henri Stendahl,  
19th-century  
French author.**



## **Engaging teachers and teacher candidates**

Educators are engaged in the program through valuable program supports. TLP holds workshops to train teachers to deliver the program. The program complements provincial curricula requirements and provides students with an engaging exercise that makes learning relevant and real.

## **Working with Business leaders and the broader community**

Business leaders in a number of communities served as Tier 2 judges in selecting winning essays. The Turning Points award ceremonies are an engaging experience for parents, teachers, community members and business leaders, as they support students to read their personal essays to an audience. This year, 72 students read their essays at 10 regional award celebrations across the country.



Writing is a process that is far greater than simply putting words on paper. For many it can be a way of living, both in solitude and in collaboration; a way to explore our worlds, life experiences, and self. It can allow us to restore continuity and discover our stories.

Richardson, Parr & Campbell, 2008

# Identified Areas for Program Improvement.

- The importance of working closely with the school board staff has proven invaluable for the recruitment of teachers, the delivery of the program and for follow up. Teachers can connect with both TLP staff and board staff for questions or concerns.
- A clearer understanding of the purpose and expectations of the program are very important for teachers as it would help ensure students get the most out of the program. Program guidelines should be made more clear and expectations regarding deadlines need to be communicated and enforced.
- Planned improvements include a review of the current grade categories, a review and update of the existing Resource Guide (both French and English), and a more focused effort to use distance learning to support educators remotely. Additionally, a strategic plan to engage French language teachers at a school board level.

**The Learning Partnership is implementing a number of program improvements for delivery in the 2019-20 school year.**

# About The Learning Partnership

The Learning Partnership (TLP) is a Canadian charity that prepares students to thrive in a diverse, connected and changing world.

The Learning Partnership was founded in 1993 to address the disconnect between the business and education sectors. Twenty-five years later, we continue to leverage the best thinking from educators, employers and government to design a wide range of experiential programs that ensure today's students are prepared with the skills they need to solve the challenges of tomorrow.

The Learning Partnership is unique in the educational charity space as:

- Our programs are inclusive by design—by providing programs in the regular classroom, we reach students of all demographics, including those who might face barriers to participation in after-school or weekend programs.
- We bring together education, business and government leaders to network and share ideas, thus reducing silos and enhancing our collective impact.
- We train and support public school teachers to deliver our programs, ensuring the long-term sustainability of their impact.

**In 2018-19, The Learning Partnership's experiential learning programs engaged 368,516 students.**

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# Appendix A: Turning Points Program Supporters

**Lead National Program Sponsor**

Anonymous

**Newfoundland & Labrador  
Program Sponsor:**



**With additional support from:**

PAL Airlines

# Appendix B: Turning Points in the Media

## QE students awarded for essay-writing

Weyburn Review  
JUNE 20, 2019 04:00 PM



Grade 6 students at Queen Elizabeth School were honoured for writing award-winning essays as they took part in the Turning Points program, and received their certificates at the school on June 10.

The Learning Partnership's Turning Points program is designed to promote awareness, resiliency and literacy among Canadian public school students through written expression.



So proud of all our @NLESDCA students and reading their #TurningPoints essays as part of @TLPCanada. Thank you to all the amazing teachers too. You are all winners.



7:19 PM · May 28, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

6 Retweets 26 Likes

## Local News

### Students Share Defining Moments With Turning Point Essays

May 29, 2019 09:27 am



Students this week in the metro area bared their souls in poignant, funny, often emotional accounts of some of their defining moments.

On Tuesday the Learning Partnership presented the winning essays from the Turning Points program.