



## CHANGEMAKERS: JAY SCHRODER

NOMINATED BY SUNSHINE DAMICO-IVY AND MAUREEN LOOMIS

**Jay Schroder is an implementation coach for the Southern Oregon Regional Educator Network (SOREN). In this role, he supports SOREN's mission to create affirming school environments where all adults and children feel safe and know they matter and belong. In her nomination, math teacher Sunshine Damico-Ivy noted how "Jay demonstrates exceptional compassion and leadership in his roles supporting educators and students."**

**S**chroder, a teacher for 24 years, was acknowledged for pursuing excellence with awards from the Oregon Council of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English. Schroder shifted to facilitating professional learning for teachers after observing how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing education system challenges. He felt he could have a broader positive impact helping educators and preservice teachers thrive than if he had remained in the classroom.

### HELPING EDUCATORS RECONNECT WITH THEIR PASSION AND SKILL

"Now working as an implementation coach, Jay facilitates intensive, ongoing professional learning for educators in Southern Oregon. He provides them with tools to create positive learning environments for their students and teach from their best selves.

"Jay's classroom experience means that when he approaches teacher training, he does it by first honoring teachers' experiences and grounding his lessons in those experiences. He focuses on building community within the session, resulting in participants feeling comfortable to be vulnerable about their challenges both in and out of the classroom.

"Well-being is a broad concept, and he presents participants with a variety of strategies for discovering and nurturing it. Jay understands that every teacher has unique skills and strengths, so teachers can choose ideas and strategies he offers to best fit their individual needs. Session activities include circles where teachers explicitly share their experiences and writing prompts that explore the unique difficulties they face. Many teachers benefit greatly from expressive writing, a process through which they identify and rewrite the trauma-based stories that can make them susceptible to not teaching from their best selves. Others get more mileage

from strategies to help bring out the best in students, such as building moments of positive messaging for students into their classroom routines."

### REVITALIZING TEACHERS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

"Jay is the author of *Teach From Your Best Self: A Teacher's Guide to Thriving in the Classroom* (Routledge, 2023), a book meant to revitalize education through effective training that empowers educators to create educational environments where students and teachers thrive. By supporting educator capacity, the principles in Jay's book align with Learning Forward's Leadership standard. Readers are guided to deepen their capacity to respond to teaching stressors in ways that don't burn them out, instead helping them bring their best to effectively advocate for students' needs while creating equitable classroom environments.

"Teachers in 11 Southern Oregon districts have participated in Jay's yearlong professional development program, which empowers them to identify their driving force for teaching, reconnect with their passion, and thrive in an increasingly challenging profession.

"After working with Jay, 100% of surveyed participants reported feeling confident in their ability to create and sustain a learning environment where all students experience a sense of belonging, which supports receptivity to learning. 100% of survey takers said the program had 'definitely' or 'mostly' helped them thrive despite teaching stressors. Teachers in or nearing burnout have come away revitalized after working with him."

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*If you would like to nominate a changemaker, visit [learningforward.org/changemakers](https://learningforward.org/changemakers). ■*