

---

## *Touchstones Summer Tour Edition*

---



*Educators in Lancaster-Lebanon IU-13 exploring Touchstones*

---

*Touchstones Summer Tour*  
**Changing the Game in  
Pennsylvania**  
by Sharon Thomas

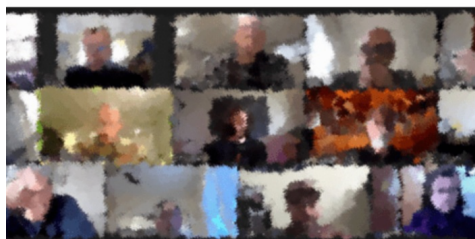
The bucolic landscape of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was the site of the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13's annual conference in June, where Touchstones hosted two sessions on collaborative discussion and the Touchstones process at Lampeter-Strasburg High School. IU-13 is a regional education service agency that supports the 22 public school districts in Lancaster and Lebanon counties in addition to students in nonpublic schools, preschoolers, and adult learners throughout Pennsylvania. IU-13 opens the conference not only to public and nonpublic educators but also to parents to foster deeper understanding of education throughout the community.

The conference theme was "Game Changers: Strengthening Your Playbook," and Touchstones was there to work with teachers, administrators, and counselors from the area's public and independent elementary and secondary schools. Across all of their different contexts, they all shared similar concerns about student behavior, lack of confidence in discussion, and changes in student engagement over the years and also a belief in the power of students and teachers to improve those issues moving forward.

Hearing Pennsylvania educators' stories about students in their classrooms reinforces the universal need for explicit instruction on how to discuss ideas and issues, how to listen, and how to collaborate. Touchstones was honored to participate in the IU-13 conference and to provide tools and resources to address their hopes for the future.



## Open- Enrollment Workshop

Want to learn how  
Touchstones teaches  
listening and  
collaboration skills?



Join us for our  
August  
**online**  
workshop!



 August 7, 2024;  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm ET  
 Online via Zoom

[Click here to  
register!](#)



*Touchstones Summer Tour*  
**The Cherry on Top:  
Collaboration and  
Conversation in Michigan**  
By Sharon Thomas

In all the years that I have worked with Michigan schools, educators from across the state have been united in one travel recommendation: “You must see Traverse City during cherry season.” In June, that dream came true at the Michigan Continuous Improvement Facilitators Network (MCIFN) Conference.

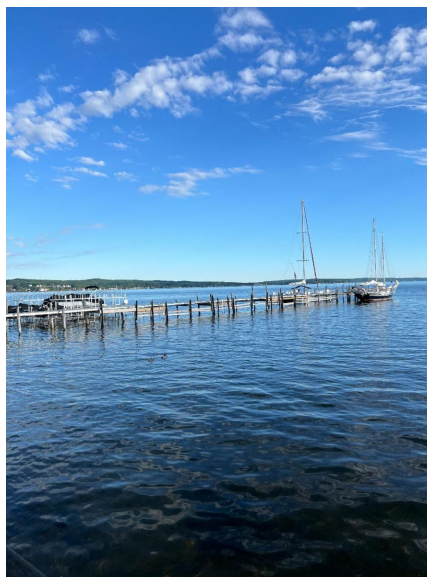
I was honored to be the keynote speaker on the final day of the event, which focused not only on student needs across Michigan but also on the needs of the adults in school buildings in bringing about positive change for students. Western Michigan was as beautiful and inspiring as I’d been told it would be, and so were the educators gathered there.

MCIFN is a trailblazing organization. Years before most schools and districts around the globe recognized the need for concerted, ongoing support for

educators as part of daily school life, MCIFN was organizing and developing resources for educators across the state to fill that need.

To support them in closing out the conference in a helpful way, I focused the keynote presentation on having them reflect both individually and with their colleagues on what lies ahead for them next year and how they can use data and research, a focus on collaborative discussion, and elements of leadership coaching to begin to plan for those coming changes. Their openness and even light-heartedness in approaching the coming stressors was truly remarkable, especially at the end of an arduous school year.

Touchstones will continue to travel the world supporting children and adults in building a better world through community and discussion with more stops to come in the months ahead. We hope to see you soon in a circle near you!





Try email marketing for free today!