

Florida district in Redesign PD Community of Practice partners with teachers

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As one of 22 districts participating in the Redesign PD Community of Practice, facilitated by Learning Forward, Lake County Schools is learning the importance of redesigning professional learning in partnership with teachers.

When Andrea Pyatt, the district’s Innovative Professional Development (iPD) facilitator, stepped in to her role in early 2015, she reviewed student data and saw low performance in math across the district. Coming from a background in health care, where she was a clinical scientist, she didn’t want to roll out a new professional development program without improving the overall professional learning system. “You can’t just randomly throw PD to teachers and expect it to change the system,” she says.

She also wanted the process to be led by teachers and informed by their feedback. So she created a math team with middle and high school teachers, administrators, and district-level math specialists across all grade levels.

“I wanted it to come from the team and not from me,” she says. Through their conversations, team members shared that because the new standards require more advanced math skills in lower grades, many teachers felt they didn’t have the skills and expertise they needed to teach the content.

“This team really stepped up and told me what they needed,” Pyatt says. “I’m glad that we had these conversations because they were very open and honest with me and we



Lake County's vision for using data

VISION
Our teachers and leaders will have access to relevant data that drives personalization toward improving practice, which will enable a more effective and informed professional learning experience.

GOALS

1. Measure all major professional learning initiatives against quality check of systemwide criteria.
2. Assess teacher and leader reactions of professional learning initiatives with comparable and rigorous measurement tools.
3. Engage teachers and leaders in the learning cycle that uses formative assessment to become more informed, thoughtful, and responsive to improved teacher practice.

learned together.”

The program specialist at the secondary level, who has since moved to a state-level position, designed an in-person content training for teachers in which she presented them with a math task and challenged them to work with other teachers to solve it. Through the process, they learned other ways to approach the problems and strategies they could use with their own students.

In addition to the content training, the district also began working with Math Solutions (www.mathsolutions.com) to implement a lesson study process. Consultants partner with classroom teachers in 4th and 8th grade and Algebra 1 classes to teach lessons to students and then reflect on how it worked. Working with the consultants, Pyatt says, has “expanded their thinking of what’s possible.”

Now Pyatt and her team are seeing evidence that both professional

learning opportunities are making a positive difference, particularly at the elementary level.

The math team has grown from 18 to 30 people since it was formed and plans to continue providing math support to teachers through content training and lesson study cycles. The overall effort to redesign professional learning has also contributed to a stronger partnership between the professional development and curriculum departments.

The Redesign PD Community of Practice engages teams from 22 of the nation’s leading school districts and charter management organizations in identifying local professional learning challenges and creating scalable solutions. Learning Forward facilitates the community, where teams participate in continuous learning cycles to improve how they manage their professional learning systems.