

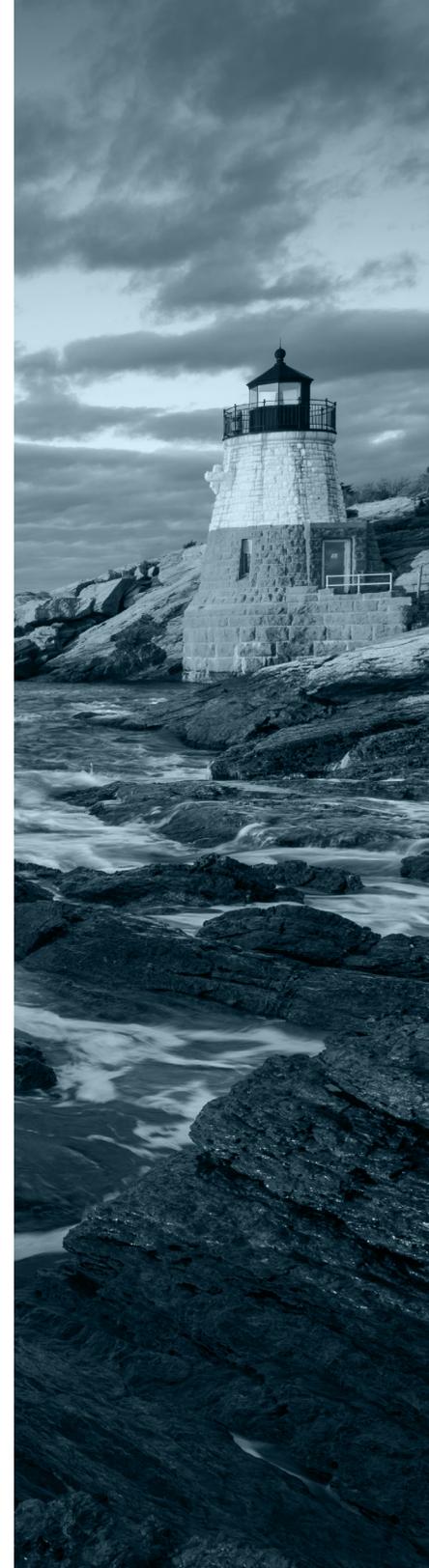


WHAT MATTERS NOW NETWORK: RHODE ISLAND

Two districts in Rhode Island—Smithfield Public Schools and The Met—along with the Rhode Island Office of Innovation and the Rhode Island Department of Education, have been part of the national What Matters Now Network focused on improving curriculum implementation through collaborative improvement science work.

Through the WMN Network, these RI districts have identified core professional development supports needed for educators to access and use high quality instructional materials. The districts that have participated or currently are participating in the WMN Network have focused on elementary level writing, elementary level math, and high school level math. They have grounded all their work in data and built capacity by supporting teachers in using real-time student data through a Looking at Student Work (LASW) protocol to best align lessons to standards. This work supports the 2019 Rhode Island state legislature requirement that all districts in the state have rigorous and robust tier 1 curricula.

The WMN network has been in operation for 18 months; its work has resulted in increased **focus, purpose** and **impact of teacher collaboration**, and has increased **educator comfort level** and **efficacy** in implementing **instructional materials** in ways that meet student needs.





WMN RHODE ISLAND: SCALABLE PROCESSES AND TOOLS



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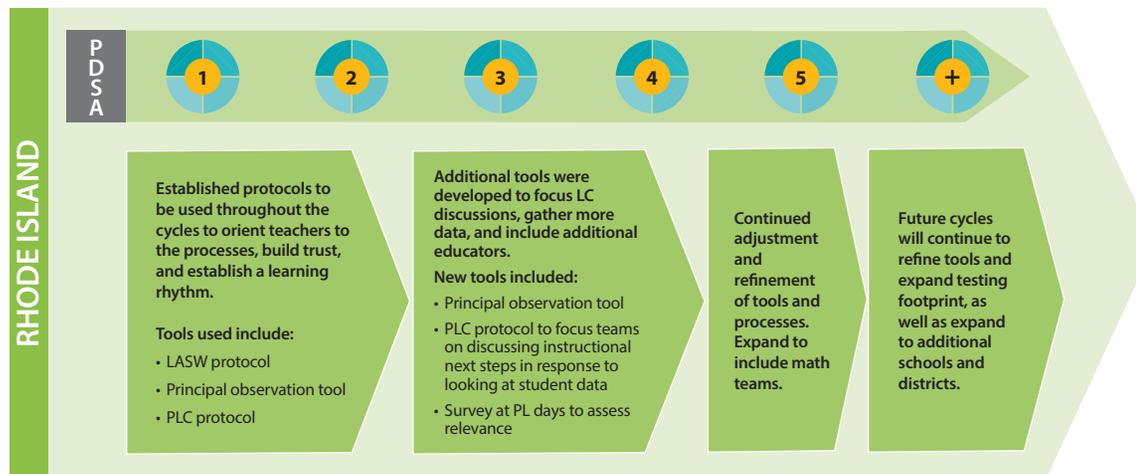
– Participating Teacher

THE WHAT MATTERS NOW NETWORK efforts are grounded in Improvement Science - piloting and testing improvements to protocols and processes to maximize their impact. Since the coalition began eighteen months ago, we have run five “cycles of inquiry,” called PDSA cycles. These have allowed the RI WMN Network participants to:

- Test improvements to how they are structuring collaborative professional learning time to maximize that time together - such as shifting monthly staff meetings from sit-and-get/share-out meetings to engaged/“doing” meetings
- Embed a Looking At Student Work structure and protocol into the day-to-day approach that educators take in district when assigning next lessons to students
- Update the LASW and data collection processes to focus collaborative teacher time on students’ work and responsive teaching supports and strategies
- Support educators in choosing and implementing best instructional next steps, depending on identified student/ class needs

These efforts, all grounded in curriculum implementation, have shifted the culture of learning teams in participating schools. There is a renewed energy during peer collaborative times to be efficient with the limited amount of time available to them. Additionally (and this is a big one) teacher teams have gone from a mindset of “we just ‘know’ what to do with our students,” to “we have to ground our work in the data that we see about our students.”

They have also shifted the administrative mindsets and focus at participating districts.





WMN RHODE ISLAND: RESULTS

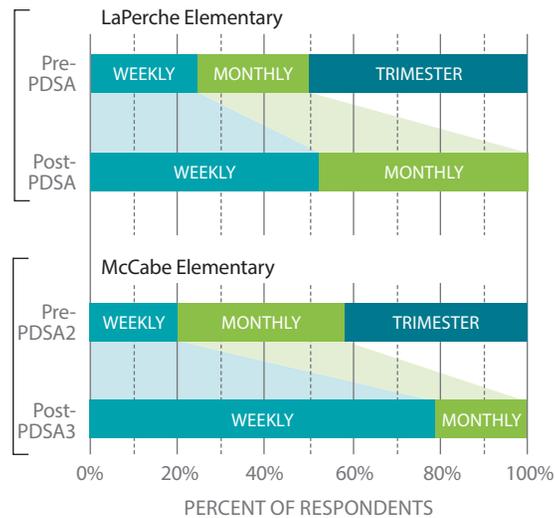


Since fall 2018, we have seen great results with those districts that have deeply engaged in the work. Data from one district, for example, show that the WMN Network efforts led to:

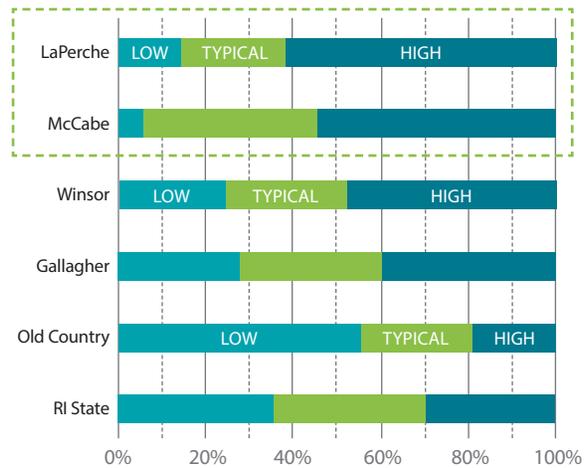
- **A fifty-eight percentage point increase** in the number of elementary educators at one school who collaboratively used student work to inform instructional decisions every week, without any changes in the amount of time educators had to work together.

- Schools engaged in the network reported between **eleven and twenty percentage points more students in “high growth”** on the state’s annual assessment, compared to the district as a whole.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT SURVEY RESPONSES
Q: How often do you collaboratively look at student work?



2018-2019 RICAS Growth Results



▶ **DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENTS** IN THE TYPE OF TEACHER INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENT WORK IS CORRELATED WITH HIGH STUDENT GROWTH AT THE TWO PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS.



WMN RHODE ISLAND: GOALS MOVING FORWARD



We know not everything works the same in every context. But we also know we shouldn't hide a great idea from other schools and districts. And we think this is the perfect time to lift the WMN Network efforts up and bring them to a broader audience.

For more information about the What Matters Now Network, visit:

<https://learningforward.org/networks/what-matters-now-network/>.

OVER THE NEXT TWO ACADEMIC YEARS, WE SEEK TO:

1

Recruit 1-2 additional districts to join the WMN Network in Rhode Island, focusing on districts that have math curriculum implementation challenges and collaborative teacher time that could be more focused on student work and instructional choices.

2

Run six new PDSA cycles (three each academic year) to improve the tools and processes of each participating district. Continue to support the important and successful collaborations among teachers and principals in the current schools.

3

Create an implementation toolkit that RI schools and districts can take and repurpose for their own improvement science/WMN type effort, drawing lessons from the first phase of the WMN Network as well as this upcoming phase (Spring 2022). This toolkit will be open-source and will include documents created by and for districts.

4

Engage RIDE in conversations about how to adapt and share the Looking at Student Work (LASW) protocol with additional districts in alignment with RIDE's goal to support teachers' use of student data.

