

RACE TO THE TOP: PROJECT 1 - Literacy and Common Core State Standards

Executive Summary:

The Literacy and Common Core Standards Project focuses on extensive professional development and follow-up coaching to support teachers in teaching critical literacy skills and math and in implementing teaching and assessment methods that are consistent with the Common Core State Standards which will officially be adopted in California in the 2014-15 school year. The largest investment for the grant, \$12,165, 500 will go to support these efforts and includes funds to support professional development time and compensate participating teachers during school time, minimizing the amount of substitutes and the necessity to pull teachers out of class. We are also budgeting sufficient funds to provide professional development for all teachers, comprehensively transforming the instructional environment from teacher centered to student-centered. For this project we will pay for two years of additional library media time at .6 FTE for 11 sites, literacy coaches for two years, math coaches for four years, Reading Apprenticeship training for secondary teachers, high school English Learner intervention teacher, document cameras and K-8 classroom libraries.

March 3, 2014

Last October, our Scope of Work (SOW) was approved by the Department of Education. The SOW outlines our activities, deliverables and milestones over the grant period. Recently, we requested two amendments to the SOW in Project 1 and 4, based on input from the sites. The amendments were approved in February.

The amendment granted in Project 1 (Literacy and the Common Core) allows us to postpone implementing Stephanie Harvey's Comprehension at the Core professional development until 2015-2016 at Alvarado, Eastin, Emanuele, and Pioneer Elementary Schools. This request was made in order to better coordinate professional development activities at the school sites.

The amendment granted in Project 4 allows us to roll out all student technology devices next year, instead of rolling them out over the next two years. We requested this because of concerns of inequity for students, based on feedback from teachers and principals. Teachers and students can look forward to receiving the student devices next fall.

A committee will be formed this spring to review device options for K-2 and make adoption recommendations prior to the end of the school year. Another committee will meet during the same time period to make recommendations for devices for special education students.

January 28, 2014

Some big changes are happening in the 9th grade Algebra 1 classes at Logan, thanks to the hard work and dedication of teachers and students. This amazing team of teachers is working to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed in Algebra. The changes they've

made fall into three main areas: equitable practices and policies; implementing the Common Core and Math Studio; and collaboration. This work is part of Project 1 (Literacy and Common Core) and Project 5 (Grading and Assessment) in the RTTT-D grant.

The six teachers who teach 9th grade Algebra 1 and their math coach, George Oliviero, started by agreeing to three significant policy changes in grading, classroom management plan, and common formative assessments. They (also are striving) to use multiple entry points, multiple representations and error analysis as common practices. The focus is on giving every student an equitable opportunity to learn and show content mastery in the class, even if it means allowing students to make up assignments and retake tests as needed. The team has created common formative assessments, which allows teachers to determine which skills and concepts the students have mastered or need to work on, and then provide interventions as needed. (District equity consultant) Enid Lee has been consulting with the team to support them in developing and implementing these policies.

In addition to changes in policy, the teachers are rebuilding the Algebra 1 course based on the common core math standards. They are implementing their learning from Math Studio, infusing the Mathematical Habits of Mind and Habits of Interaction in their classrooms. This year teachers and students have had a particular focus on student discourse, as well as on functions and patterns.

Collaboration has been key in making all these changes. The master schedule was created to give them a common prep period, when the teachers can talk informally about their lessons, visit each other and discuss issues at length. The team has been meeting outside of school as well, often meeting after school, over dinner and on weekends to create units. They have been paid hourly for their work, but they have truly gone above and beyond.

The work by these teachers is extensive and difficult, but rewarding as well. The best news is that they are truly making a difference for students. There was a good improvement in the passing rate for students in the first quarter. At semester, the passing rate was about what it had been in the past. The Cohort is examining both its practices and student practices for future improvement, showing that with change it's often two steps forward and one step back.

Thanks to the Logan 9th Grade Algebra teachers for doing everything they can to make certain that all students succeed.

October 22, 2013

(The 2013-14 school year) is a year of transition as we begin implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the 21st century learning skills of critical thinking and collaboration. In order to achieve the goals of the CCSS, students must be able to think critically and collaborate with others.

"Critical thinkers:

- Collect, assess, interpret and analyze relevant information.
- Reason effectively.

- Construct arguments.
- Make sound judgments and decisions
- Identify, define and solve authentic problems and essential questions.
- Reflect critically on learning experiences, processes and solutions.

"In order for students to collaborate well with others, they must:

- Demonstrate the ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.
- Use technology tools for collaboration.
- Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.
- Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member.
- Work productively in teams for sustained periods of time to develop high-quality products.

"These 21st century skills are embedded in Technology Integration, Reading Apprenticeship, Math Studio, Stephanie Harvey's Comprehension at the Core, STEM, Writing Workshop and Critical Literacy. We know that through collaboration with grade level/ department colleagues, our technology specialists and your literacy and math coaches, we will be able to transform teaching in New Haven so our students graduate college and career ready."

September 3, 2013

More than 600 New Haven educators participated in one or more professional development opportunities during the summer, thanks to the District's successful pursuit last year of a federal Race to the Top grant.

Staff members received extra instruction in math, literacy, technology, academic parent/teacher teams and coaching, RTTT Director Lisa Metzinger reports. "The focus of all professional development was to implement the Common Core State Standards while infusing 21st-century learning skills in the process," Ms. Metzinger noted. "Sessions incorporated elements of the Five Cs: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, cultural competence and communication."

March 19, 2013

"Project 1 focuses on extensive professional development and follow-up coaching to support teachers in teaching and assessing literacy and math that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Scott Pizani, Director of Student Interventions, is the leader of this project.

"As part of our initial work on building awareness of the CCSS, principals and teachers have been conducting professional development with their staffs throughout the year to build common core awareness. These modules are based on professional development they received at the Alameda County Office of Education last spring. In addition to staff professional development, Scott Pizani, Director of Instruction Olivia Lynch, and Chief Academic Officer Arlando Smith have held several parent meetings to build common core awareness with parents and members of our community.

The RTT-D grant provides extensive funding to support ongoing professional development in literacy and math that is aligned to the common core and personalized learning. This will include professional development in Reader's Apprenticeship, K-6 Literacy, and the Math Studio Project. The professional development will begin this summer, and teachers will be paid the hourly rate to attend the training. More specifics about the summer professional development and the audiences for the training will be coming later this month. There will also be ongoing professional development and coaching in literacy and math throughout the school year, both of which are funded by the RTT-D grant.

“Additionally, a new collaboration is being developed between the Division of Teaching and Learning and the preschools that feed into New Haven Unified. This collaboration has been formed to build awareness of the kindergarten Common Core State Standards and the academic expectations for kindergarten students.

“There is much more work ahead for all of us as we begin our initial implementation of the common core. It's an exciting time of new learning for everyone. Thanks to all the teachers and administrators who have been working hard on this!”