



A MODEL IMPLEMENTATION IN SKOKIE, IL

Professional development is key to district's success

If you want to know how to implement a new curriculum in your district, look no further than Niles Township in Skokie, IL.

The district began implementing *Eureka Math* in the 2015–2016 school year in Kindergarten through Grade 8 after conducting an extensive evaluation of various math curricula. *“When we looked through other resources, it was obvious to us that Eureka Math was the best option for our school districts,”* Executive Director of K–12

NILES TOWNSHIP DISTRICT 219

Skokie, IL

Niles Township High School District 219 is a joint initiative with Skokie-Morton Grove Elementary District 69 and Gold Elementary School District 67 serving 6,500 students (K–12) in 5 schools.

Demographics

- Free/Reduced Lunch 52%

STEM Steven Shadel says. *“After we made that recommendation, we went into full professional development and support mode.”*

Teachers received professional development for the curriculum during the summer of 2015, just before they started using *Eureka Math*. During the first year of implementation, teachers received five full days of in-district training, plus ongoing training throughout the year, and three days of professional learning at a *Eureka Math* summer Institute.

Shadel explains that the district also brought together a leadership team in that first year to work on pacing, lesson modifications, and assessment development. That team then guided grade level teams in implementing the curriculum.

“The first year was huge for us because, even though it was stressful, our teachers felt that they knew where they were going, that their practice had improved, and that they had really great discussions around instruction and assessments,” Shadel says.

- English Language Learners 26%

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Extensive Professional Development

The next school year, 2016–2017, Shadel led professional development sessions for all the district’s principals, assistant principals, and many district office administrators, something he says school districts new to *Eureka Math* might want to do right off the bat. *“This training helped our administrators understand how to question teachers and lead them in planning lessons for different age groups in the Eureka Math program, and it also helped them understand next steps for professional development after classroom observations,”* he says.

Shadel also advises districts getting started with *Eureka Math* to use the *Teach Eureka* video series and to take and discuss the End-of-Module and Mid-Module assessments during professional learning sessions. *“We made some modifications to Eureka Math assessments, but you need to know where you’re going and you need to have some discussions around that,”* he advises.

Shadel says the districts currently use

assessments.”

Steven Shadel, Executive Director of K-12 STEM



instructional coaches working with teachers to analyze and reflect on student data, and the teaching team is particularly focused on differentiation. For example, to help English learners, teachers make sure they introduce *Eureka Math* vocabulary early in the day, before the math lesson even starts.

They've also extended the math block by 15 minutes, allowing for more small group time, which teachers say is especially helpful for struggling learners.

No More Fear about State Testing

Teachers have responded well to the transition to *Eureka Math*, Shadel says. In particular, they no longer worry about whether their students are prepared for the end-of-year PARCC assessment given to public school students in Illinois and several other states.

“Before, teachers created their own resources to prepare kids because our major text resource did not prepare our students for the rigor of the PARCC assessment,” Shadel said. *“Now our teachers feel confident. They*

think, ‘I’ve not only discussed these topics, I’ve assessed them. Kids now know the vocabulary, they know how to represent problems in different ways, they know how to justify their thinking, they know have multiple strategies to solve problems.’”

Niles Township High School District 219 is in a joint initiative with Skokie-Morton Grove Elementary School District 69 and Golf Elementary School District 67 to ensure that all students from Kindergarten through 12th grade benefit from a guaranteed and viable common curriculum and assessment program that properly prepares them for high school and college. This initiative, called Classrooms First Collaborative (CFC), is part of the District 219 Board of Education's "Articulate" goal, which identifies K-12 curricular collaboration as the key to achieving high school and college readiness.



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