**Staff Development Survey: Kimpton Middle School**

**Carol Sparber**

There are several instructional programs that are undergoing change at Kimpton Middle School. Due to the need to improve student achievement, the district is using new programs in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. According to the latest state report card, overall academic achievement received a component grade of D. More concerning however is that students in 7th and 8th grade did not meet the state indicators for either English Language Arts or Mathematics. These subjects were the primary topics for discussion with the principal because it is imperative to improve student achievement in both of these areas. The newest instructional program in the middle school is the math curriculum. It was piloted two years ago at the high school and is currently being implemented with all of the math classes at Kimpton Middle School this year. It is hoped that the new instructional math program will help improve student achievement in mathematics.

The new math curriculum used at Kimpton Middle school utilizes an accompanying software program called MATHia®, tailored specifically for students in grades 6 – 8. It builds on personalized learning tasks with unique tools that differentiate instruction for each student allowing for curriculum content to be mastered at an individual pace. The program includes multi-step real world problems for building conceptual understanding and fluency using interactive tools and widgets to engage all learners and it is supplemented with consumable workbooks. The program tracks all student work so teachers can use the results to drive instruction and focus on the areas where students need support. Furthermore, the MATHia®

program allows teachers to run reports that provide summative pre- and post-tests that document student’s progress and performance on benchmarks and standards. Prior to implementation of the new math curriculum and the MATHia® program, teachers were asked to read a book on how to model the classroom. Several days of professional development were provided by representatives from Carnegie Learning to help teachers learn about the new curriculum and to help them navigate the MATHia® computer program.

A survey regarding the new math program was sent out to 18 teachers who are currently using the new math curriculum and the MATHia® program at Kimpton Middle school. Teachers were asked to respond to a series of questions pertaining to the type of direct assistance that they might need in order to implement the new math program. After several gentle reminders, ten teachers (56%) responded to the survey. Responses for each question were analyzed and categorized according to common themes (e.g., PD while kids are out, PD days, and more PD time would be summarized as Professional Development). Responses for each question are graphed in order to create a visual depiction of teacher responses.

**Survey Questions 1 & 2**

Overall, respondents reported the need for professional development. Five out of ten teachers indicated the need for further professional development in order to successfully implement the new math program. Likewise, four out of ten teachers indicated a need for additional professional development in order to successfully implement the MATHia® program.

**Survey Questions 3 & 4**

Results indicate a mix of responses in terms of the type of direct assistance teachers want from supervisors. In order to implement the new curriculum, two teachers requested curriculum maps, two teachers requested time for implementation, two teachers requested more professional development, and two teachers stated that they did not need help from administrators. However, in order to implement the MATHia® program, four out of ten respondents indicated the need for administrators to provide more computers or Chromebooks.

**Survey Questions 5 & 6**

Survey results indicate a mix of responses in terms of the type of direct assistance teachers want from outside sources. In order to implement the new curriculum, three out of ten teachers stated that they did not need help from outside sources. However, in order to implement the MATHia® program, five out of ten respondents indicated the need for professional development from outside sources.

**Survey Questions 7 & 8**

Survey results indicated 4 out of 10 teachers want time to communicate with other teachers for direct assistance in implementing the new math curriculum. In order to implement the MATHia® program, 5 out of 10 teachers want time to collaborate with other teachers.

**Survey Question 9**

Survey results indicate a mix of responses in terms of the type of resources needed to help with instruction. Three out of ten teachers do not want any additional resources, two out of ten teachers indicated more time is needed to create lessons, and two out of ten teachers stated the need for more Chromebooks to help with instruction.

**Summary of All Responses for Direct Assistance for Implementing the New Math Program**

Overall, summary results indicate teachers want direct assistance for implementing the new math program with more professional development and more time for collaboration. It was interesting to note that six teachers do not feel they need any direct assistance for implementing the new math program.

**Summary of All Responses for Direct Assistance for Implementing MATHia**®

Overall, summary results indicate teachers want direct assistance for implementing MATHia® with more professional development and more time for collaboration and team planning. Again there are six teachers who do not feel they need any direct assistance for implementing MATHia®. As an administrator, I would be interested in clarification from these teachers as to why additional assistance is not needed.

Two essential themes emerged from the survey data 1) Professional development and 2) collaboration time. Teachers at Kimpton Middle school are requesting additional professional development and collaboration time in order to successfully implement the new math program. These survey results correspond to strategies recommended by Marzano and Toth (2013) for helping teachers improve and sustain performance.

Across all survey results, professional development is the strategy most commonly indicated for direct assistance in implementing the new math curriculum/MATHia®. Since teachers have already received several days of professional development and training from Carnegie Learning, further professional development should be implemented in the form of coaching. Research conducted by Joyce and Showers (2002) found that continuing technical assistance, through coaching, results in greater classroom implementation. Furthermore, Marzano and Toth (2013) stated that coaching helps teachers transfer new information and training to the classroom resulting in more frequent and appropriate use of strategies.

Teachers also indicated the need for additional time for collaboration in order to successfully implement the new math curriculum/MATHia®. Collaboration at this time should occur through existing professional learning communities at Kimpton Middle school. By working interdependently, teacher teams can achieve common goals (DuFour, DuFour & Eker, 2008). Collaboration allows teachers to have the opportunity to discuss thoughts and concerns, share resources, and plan rigorous and appropriate lessons for improving student achievement.

**What I would do with this information**

Professional development and collaboration are both necessary strategies for improving teacher and student performance – especially when it comes to implementing a new instructional program. As a future administrator, I would take each of these strategies to the next level. For enhancing professional development, I would invest in teacher leaders as instructional coaches to help support intervention specialists and classroom teachers. Instructional coaches can help teachers deepen their understanding of a new instructional program and build teacher capacity to implement effective instructional practices. My ultimate goal of using teacher leaders as instructional coaches would be to customize professional development to match each teacher’s needs in order to improve student learning and performance.

For enhancing collaboration, I would implement online professional learning communities as suggested by Marzano and Toth (2013). Currently, one of the main obstacles for effective PLCs is limited common meeting time. Use of online collaboration allows for efficient exchange of information, viewing and sharing of resources, and timely communication (Marzano & Toth, 2013). A supplemental online format would provide intervention specialists and classroom teachers with a wide range of resources that are conveniently accessible.

**References**

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (2008). *Revisiting professional learning communities at*

*work: New insights for improving schools.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.).

Alexandria, BA: ASCD.

Marzano, R. J., & Toth, M.D. (2013). *Teacher evaluation that makes a difference.* Alexandria,

VA: ASCD.

**Math Curriculum Survey at Stow**

1. What type of direct assistance do you need to be successful implementing the new Math Curriculum?(ex: more PD, PD days while kids are out of school, helpful resources or links, time to observe other classes, more Department time, etc.)(10 responses)

PD while kids are out

PD

More PD time with the rest of the department to plan lessons and determine which activities are essential would be most helpful.

More time in the school day

more PD

More time using the software in the classroom will eventually iron out all the concerns we have.

more time to collaborate with teachers on pacing

More planning time.

PD days with teachers/Department time

A day to rotate our students as a large class into signing up for Mathia.

1. What type of direct assistance do you need to be successful implementing the MATHia program?(ex: more PD, PD days while kids are out of school, helpful resources or links, time to observe other classes, more Department time, etc.)(10 responses)

PD while kids are out of school

PD

Time to observe teachers successfully implementing MATHia would be helpful, as would PD on how to use the data to shape our lessons.

More time in the school day

time to observe other classes

Observations, PD for implementing

information on best practices for assigning MATHia lessons

One on one meetings with fellow teachers.

Department time

I would need more chromebooks in my classroom to use it regularly. I only have two currently.

1. For the new Curriculum, what do you need from you supervisors or administrators? What can they do to help more?(10 responses)

Keep getting us the skills practice books

none

An easy to follow/read curriculum map from our supervisor or time to create one would be helpful to help determine which lessons/activities are essential.

Understand that this new change in the curriculum takes time from students and teachers.

More PD with Carnegie instructors

PD time

Pacing guide

Specific to math lab: Ability to do more parallel instruction with classroom teachers.

Ask what materials we should purchase as a district

Nothing at the moment

1. For the MATHia program what do you need from you supervisors or administrators? What can they do to help more?(10 responses)

More computers

none

Access to Chromebooks for all math teachers. This is not an issue for me in particular, but it is for others.

They are doing a good job trying to go forth with this new change.

More PD with teachers who have used the program

PD time

More chromebooks to use within the classroom

Advice on how it can be applied to math lab students.

Appropriate technology

Nothing at the moment

1. For the new Curriculum, what type of direct assistance do you want from outside sources?(PD from programs not affiliated with the SMFCSD)(10 responses)

None at at this time

Observe other schools implementing the curriculum.

In my personal experiences, PD from Carnegie has not been very helpful. PD from other teachers using the program might be helpful.

I would love to research more about the successes this program has had on students so far.

Information from Carnegie Learning

PD time

Don't need but would be nice- Video showing an exemplar lesson

Provide printable resource worksheets..

none

None

6.For the MATHia program, what type of direct assistance do you want from outside sources?(PD from programs not affiliated with the SMFCSD)(10 responses)

None at this time-sometimes too much is overboard

Observe other schools implementing the program.

See answer above.

More training, so I feel comfortable implementing this in the classroom.

Opportunities for Carnegie instructors to lead PD

PD time

User guide on the functions of the program(example- hint bar, lesson lay-out)

Unsure.

none

Someone to walk us through setting up our clases again

1. In regards to the new Curriculum, what type of direct assistance do you want from other teachers in implementing these changes?(10 responses)

We need a curriculum map

none

Help creating a curriculum map.

Understanding that these changes take time.

Time to collaborate and share what is working and not working for them

The department, as a whole, does a great job communicating with each other concerning curruculum

communication on what misconceptions student have had during the lessons.

More shared experiences.

question answering/planning/meeting

Things that they have tried that work.

1. In regards to the MATHia program, what type of direct assistance do you want from other teachers in implementing these changes?(10 responses)

None at this time

none

Help determining how to best use the program.

Understand these changes take time.

I would like more opportunities to meet with the high school teachers who are using the software

Same as previous question

Communication on how others are implementing the program.

More shared experiences.

question answering/planning/meeting

Have intervention specialists and general education teachers have the same module setup

1. What types of resources do you need to help with instruction?(10 responses)

none

none

None at this time

Time

Time to create new lessons.

More incentives/motivation tips to help these kids get hooked on the new change.

Collaboration time

Chromebooks-

Printable worksheets.

Chrome books