

Iredell-Statesville Schools

A High Yield Strategies Case Study

Iredell-Statesville School District Challenge

In 2002, the Iredell-Statesville District Board of Education appointed Dr. Terry K. Holliday as Superintendent with a mandate of improving the district's ranking among North Carolina's school systems. Dr. Holliday's goal was to eliminate variability in the quality and delivery of instruction among the district's 1,600 teachers without sacrificing the creativity of any individual teacher.

Iredell-Statesville's Solution

After a pilot phase, the new professional development program was fully deployed in 2006. The district partnered with Teachscape to create a program for instructional facilitators who provide job-embedded on-site coaching and support monitoring to every building in the district. They also provide teachers with online and in-person professional learning communities that include multimedia and text-based information resources on High Yield Instructional Strategies, the program's primary focus.

Each semester, the professional development teams focus on a different strategy; for example, one semester they concentrate on setting objectives and obtaining feedback. Administrators, principals, assistant principals, and instructional facilitators conduct classroom walkthroughs to observe strategy implementation, and Teachscape's content allows them to effectively look for critical practices. Afterward, the observational data are analyzed online in accordance with the district's Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.

Although the teams focus intensely on only one strategy per semester, individual teachers can access the full Teachscape library of resources and strategy concepts at any time. This means the teachers still maintain a degree of autonomy throughout the process, experimenting with new strategies on their own while still being guided by the online content's research and guidelines.

Iredell-Statesville has created a Leadership Academy for instructional facilitators in order to provide continuous improvement. The district advertises for new instructional facilitators each fall, trains interested individuals throughout the year, and interviews them for open positions in the spring.

Program Benefits

Teachscape's nine categories of High Yield Instructional Strategies are based on research by renowned education experts at the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

The training content and resources are continually being updated and improved. Teachers can access the support materials and suggestions for lessons at whatever time is convenient to them and review the information as many times as they need to understand a topic or concept.



"I chose Teachscape because it has the best research and the best access. The videos of real-life teachers showing best practices to my teachers make a big difference."

Dr. Terry K. Holliday,
Former Superintendent,
Iredell-Statesville Schools

Teachscape trains the instructional facilitators who are hired by the district as coach-trainers in order to ensure that educators have a resource for follow-up training issues regarding Teachscape's technology or methodologies. The system facilitates teacher accountability by recording which teachers access the online resources and how much time was spent with the resources.

Program Results

By the halfway mark in the program's four-year rollout, Iredell-Statesville closed the reading skills gap between African-American and white students by 50 percent. Plus, the reading scores of the overall student population rose to more than 90 percent proficiency. The district has also reduced its dropout rate from 10 percent to only four percent and has positive feedback in satisfaction surveys among elementary and middle school students.

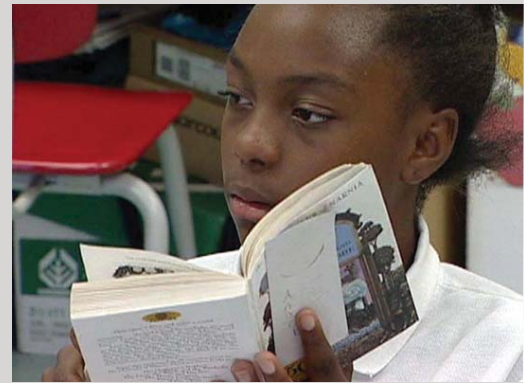
Iredell-Statesville also recorded the following accomplishments at the program's halfway mark:

- The district met 94 percent of its AYP targets (higher than the state and region averages)
- No schools had to offer supplemental services for the 2007–08 school year
- All traditional middle and high schools met or exceeded expected growth
- Graduation and dropout rates were better than the corresponding state averages
- Suspensions and expulsions lessened in frequency, and the overall rate was below the state average
- The Teacher Working Conditions survey revealed the district as above the state average on all domains
- The district decreased the percentage of market share they were losing to private schools, and public opinion of the local public school system has greatly improved

In addition to encouraging consistent high-quality instruction, the high-yield practices have gained teachers access to innovative ideas that they would never have imagined. For example, during the semester in which educators focused on objectives and feedback, teachers set yearly, quarterly, and weekly objectives with their students and included the students in setting strategies as well as reviewing which strategies were effective.

As a result of Dr. Holliday's leadership in school reform and the district's astounding success, he earned the title of North Carolina Superintendent of the Year in 2009, and in 2008, the district received the coveted Malcolm Baldrige Award.

This case study was completed with the gracious cooperation of Iredell-Statesville School District.



DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of Schools: 35
 Number of Teachers: 1,600+
 Number of Students: 21,500

*37% free and reduced lunch
 Annual growth of 500—800 students*