

Collaboration Days Benefit Teacher Instruction

Quality professional development opportunities lead to a positive school culture, improved individual teacher skills, and the development of strategies that strengthen student learning. This was evidenced in the work done by Palm Crest teachers, in partnership with LCE, and PCY staff members, during the September 13th and October 19th collaboration days.

Kindergarten teachers district-wide, explored and developed English Language Arts and Math assessment in September that would be used as a pilot during that month. They then had time to revise both assessments in October prior to conference week.

First grade teachers at PCR created formative, standards-based English Language Arts assessments in September, and began work with their LCE and PCY first grade colleagues on the district pacing guides for both English Language Arts and Math. The pacing guides were finalized in October.

Similarly, second grade PCR teachers began the year planning weekly formative, standards-based assessments in vocabulary, phonics, word analysis, and comprehension. In October, they created a resource guide for spelling, and prepared enrichment activities using the icons of Depth and Complexity. They also met with second grade teachers from LCE and PCY to complete the district English Language Arts pacing guide.

September found third grade PCR teachers focusing on several subjects. They combined a social sciences biome unit with an animal adaptations science unit, then moved on to math where they developed multiplication quizzes that spiral facts and created a system to track student progress. In October, they attended the "Creating and Scanning Assessments through Illuminate" workshop and met with third grade teachers from LCE and PCY to complete their district English Language Arts pacing guide.

Fourth grade began their planning in September focusing on writing. They learned all about the "Step-up to Writing" program and planned standards-based lessons to be implemented throughout the year. Like third grade staff, they attended the Illuminate workshop in October and met with fourth grade teachers from LCE and PCY to complete their district English Language Arts pacing guide.



In September, fifth grade teachers, depending on their subject areas and needs, attended the Illuminate workshop, reviewed Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies with the Resource Specialist teacher, worked on science and math extension projects using the icons of Depth and Complexity, and with their LCE and PCY counterparts, began working on the district English Language Arts pacing guide. In October, fifth grade PCR teachers created standards-based Language Arts and Social Studies projects using the icons of Depth and Complexity and completed the district pacing guides for Math and English Language Arts with their LCE and PCY fifth grade colleagues.

Sixth grade math teachers met with 7-8 math teachers to discuss curriculum for accelerated math, critical thinking, and the algebra program. Sixth grade language arts teachers worked on technology. They participated in an Illuminate training and learned how to effectively use the new PCR mini-laptops. They also met with sixth grade teachers from LCE and PCY to map out the English Language Arts district pacing guide. October 19 found PCR sixth grade teachers at Outdoor Science Camp in Running Springs, where they too, developed lessons in Science using the ICONS of Depth and Complexity and worked with the PCR counselor on strategies for meeting the needs of students with anxiety and behavioral issues. Because LCE sixth grade teachers were also at science camp, the week provided many informal opportunities to articulate on intervention strategies, classroom projects, and the use of technology in the classroom.

Said third grade teacher Jackie Brennan-Valentine, “We are already looking forward to the spring collaboration, and we have a lot of ideas. For example, we’d like to meet at our grade level and find ways to strengthen writing strategies, ways to help students more clearly identify topic sentences and details, and ways that help them carry over their writing knowledge to their reading.”