

OUR WORK WITH THE IFL

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The work

Our partnership with The Institute for Learning (IFL), which is an outreach of the University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center, began a few years ago with a focus on English Language Arts (ELA), literacy and the notion of nested learning communities.

Today we continue to collaborate on our work to build teacher capacity, grow stronger instructional leaders and practice two-way accountability to help us improve student outcomes.

Why The IFL?

The IFL has experience working with districts who serve large, racially diverse populations with high percentages of students living in poverty. They offer a framework and tools that focus on teaching, learning and leadership and bring us an array of expertise, research, instructional models and ongoing support to help us ensure that race, economics and disability will no longer serve as predictors of student achievement.

Our efforts with the IFL focus primarily on the development of curriculum, delivery of instruction and strengthening instructional leadership.

Engaging rigorous instruction that uses talk, and other principles of learning, is the cornerstone of our work.

The IFL provides us with research and insight to:

- ◆ How children learn English language arts and math
- ◆ Models of effective pedagogy
- ◆ Designing high quality lessons and units
- ◆ Scaffolding rigorous tasks



Our work is to ensure that race, economics and disability no longer serve as predictors of student achievement.

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Elevator Speech

When our work with the IFL began a few years ago, the **SCSD Guiding Coalition** was established. The group, which included district administrators who support instruction, participated in extensive professional development - including a two-day institute.

We must continue to collaborate and problem-solve in order for us to improve.

In 2016-17, the SCSD Guiding Coalition rolled out a *Teaching and Learning Framework* that guides and supports high-quality curricula, instruction and assessment and a clear set of expectations and effective practices that should be scaled to all classrooms.

Each year, the IFL schedules a series of days for onsite support and potential development for defined groups. In 2016-17, the IFL was on-site in SCSD for 50 days focusing on (ELA) writing arguments and rigorous tasks.

One day of leadership development has been provided for each: 1) supporting teachers in mathematics, 2) supporting teachers in ELA and 3) using Learning Walks in ELA and mathematics.

Professional development sessions have been held on English language arts, mathematics, and English language learners.

- ◆ English Language Arts: 11 Days
- ◆ Mathematics: 11 Days
- ◆ English Learners: 6 Days



2017-2018

In 2017-18, the IFL will provide 45 days of onsite professional development.

The focus:

- ◆ A targeted component to middle school mathematics.
- ◆ Teachers of English learners (EL) will focus on understanding and executing lessons that address the specific needs of learners, finding ways to design and mediate instruction for each EL.
- ◆ A cross-disciplinary team will be developed to ensure there is an understanding of how to use high cognitive demand across the text and mathematics disciplines.
- ◆ Teacher leadership that can build PLC study in buildings and implement it in classrooms as a means to building ownership, deeper learning and to foment more classrooms hospitable to the work.
- ◆ Learning labs to allow for reflection of improved practice, to provide participants with information about where each is in the understanding of specific practices, and to serve as Bridge to Practice activities that support and connect the work from learning to practice.

What are we seeing?

- ◆ IFL units developed that use text , task and talk as primary driver
- ◆ High leverage teaching practices
- ◆ IFL professional development
 - ◆ Instruction
 - ◆ Professional learning communities
 - ◆ Learning Walks as a matter of practice
- ◆ Constructive feedback for teachers

Scope of IFL PD 2017-18

English Learners (9 Days support and on-site professional development)

New teachers will receive training in rigorous reading comprehension, talk, vocabulary, writing, grammar, and formative assessment prior to engaging in a learning lab. Over the course of the year, teachers will try all aspects of their training through the Bridge to Practice activities, and during the lab, the lesson will reflect some, if not most, of what has been learned. The reflection will help understand what next steps to take to deepen understanding of these practices.

Disciplinary Literacy (12 Days support and on-site professional development)

The IFL will engage teachers of grades 6-8 in a sequence of work to support disciplinary literacy in ELA, social studies and science. These are text-heavy disciplines. IFL will help teachers discover and understand the literacy practices inherent in each of their disciplines. These sessions develop a cross-disciplinary understanding of how to engage students with text.

Elementary Literacy: The IFL will provide a multi-week workshop for 4th and 5th grade teachers with tools needed to support vibrant, meaningful and focused text discussion designed to increase student reading comprehension.

Mathematics (13 Days support and on-site professional development)

Support and sustain the work of K-5 teachers and roll up to grades 6-8.

Engaging in Math Learning

Math Lesson Labs

Supporting Ongoing Achievement Responsively

Quickstarts

Accountable Talk Online

Helping administrators understand and look for elements of high-leverage practices in math classrooms
PD will include support for teachers in the implementation of materials with fidelity.

Distributed Leadership (4 Days support and on-site professional development)

Building teacher leadership through the facilitation of PLCs

Central Leadership and Principal Leadership (7 days support and on-site PD)

Work will focus on deepening learning about and support for the implementation of high leverage practices teachers and principals have been studying with the IFL.

Elevator Pitch

The Institute for Learning is working with us (the Schenectady City School District) to help teachers become the best teachers they can be and administrators become stronger instructional leaders— through collaborative problem-solving.

The IFL has experience working with districts who serve large, diverse populations with high percentages of students living in poverty. They are guiding us through a process and providing ongoing support.

The IFL offers us professional development, an array of expertise, research, and instructional models.

We are committed to collaborating and problem-solving in order to improve student outcomes.

Our work is aligned with our vision to ensure that race, economics, and disability no longer serve as predictors of student achievement.

Let's ensure that we:

- ◆ instruct to high expectations
- ◆ are accountable
- ◆ practice two-way Accountable Talk
- ◆ provide high quality instruction and strategies so that all students can learn
- ◆ provide leadership and feedback that supports high quality instruction

⇒ The work

⇒ Why it's important

⇒ Why you care



If you have questions about our work with the IFL, please contact Tonda Dunbar, District Director of Curriculum and Instruction.