



MILWAUKEE PARTNERSHIP ACADEMY MONTHLY REPORT

June 2009

- Members of the Learning Team Initiative (Christine Anderson, Richard Bukosky, Pat Ellis, Vicky Frazier, Steve Percy, Linda Post and Linda Roundtree) presented at the MPS Hot Topics Institute on the work that is being done on Learning Teams. MPA members were also involved in facilitating some of the sessions at the institute which was held on June 18th and 19th. Day 1 of the institute focused on Learning Teams and capacity-building skill sets for transforming student achievement and teacher engagement. On Day 2 participants learned about innovative practices that have transformed MPS schools and school reform initiatives where statistically significant gains have yielded opportunity gaps because of strategic instructional choices supported by technology.
- The Writing Group of the Learning Team Initiative is working with MPS to produce a new product for Learning Teams for next school year.
- The MPA participated on the interview committee for a Literacy Specialist at MPS.
- Mary Diez from Alverno College and Antonio Rodriguez from MPS met with the Implementation Team and shared reports on the work of the grants for Project CALL (Coaching and Assessment for Leadership and Learning) and Project CLASS (Content, Leadership and Assessment for Science Standards).
- Discussion is taking place about the annual MPA summer retreat.
- The MPA provided a letter of support for the YMCA grant application relative to mentoring programs.
- MPS members of MPA Work Groups were encouraged to attend the Instructional Technology Showcase that was run for MPS employees on June 10th and to keep their work groups informed of information learned that would be helpful to their work and the MPA mission and goals.
- MPA members were invited to provide feedback and suggestions concerning the MPS Portal through a short MPS Portal User Survey.
- Comprehensive Mathematics Work Group/Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (MMP) Update:
 - A retreat for the MMP was held on June 15th.
 - A retreat is being offered for principals and math teacher leaders with one day for networking of principals, math teacher leaders, and then all together as one group and another day for the principal

and math teacher leader to work together on their School Improvement Plan. Positive feedback is being received on this.

- Some highlights of math teacher leader meetings this semester were the focus on benchmarks for moving student achievement forward and ability to bring a guest teacher along to two meetings which has helped to build capacity even more within the schools.
 - The bridge is being made tighter between 8th grade and 9th grade teachers and mathematics. A number of people work with this group including university professors and mathematicians.
 - Textbook selection for Algebra 2 and Calculus is still in committee and will be addressed again in the fall.
 - The first year of new textbook implementation is being completed in 9th grade *Discovering Algebra* and 10th grade *Discovering Geometry*. Grade level math teacher teachers across the district were brought in for Algebra and math labs that were written by mathematicians at UWM and math teacher leaders in high schools to show the pedagogy around this inquiry-based learning.
 - Inroads are being made at the high school level.
 - WKCE math scores showed small growth at the high school level and very nice growth at the 4th and 8th grade levels.
 - State standards in math and all English language arts are being revised and are out for public review at this time. Implementation Team members were invited to review the information and comment. A number of MMP members have been involved in the revision process and focus groups have been held around the state. Conversations are continuing.
 - Funding is being sought for next school year for math teacher leaders to attend and present workshops at the math conference in Green Lake.
 - Another math fellows group has completed the first few classes towards a 400 license for a K-8 math minor.
 - Systemic change is happening and needs to be sustained—embedded professional development is right now part of the culture of the schools and professional learning communities are established.
 - For additional information on the work of the Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (MMP), please see the attached May 2009 issue of *The MMP Messenger*.
- The Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group Update:
 - The work group's Subcommittee on Student Teaching in MPS has been looking at how to align the efforts between the universities and the district relative to student teaching. A draft booklet regarding student teaching in MPS that will be used as a protocol for selection of student teachers and

cooperating teachers has been created and is being reviewed by a number of people including the Implementation Team. A final document will be prepared to go out in spring.

- Discussion has been held about possible development of an ad hoc committee to address the issue of continued use of the same schools for student teaching.
- Discussion has been held on addressing issues around continuous service of cooperating teachers.
- School-based and district mentors have been structured around the work and white paper on comprehensive induction.
- Comprehensive Literacy Work Group Update:
 - In the efforts to begin making sure the reading-writing connection is in place, the National Writing Project was contacted and they made a presentation and submitted a proposal to put together an ongoing course for literacy coaches to keep their skills up to speed.
 - The work group is in the process of putting together hybrid professional development provided by all universities represented at the work group to not only provide training for literacy coaches to make sure they are highly qualified as outlined in the DIFI Plan but also to help them work towards receiving a 316 license. Consultation has taken place with DPI concerning this. Universities are reviewing their current course offerings and the competencies within, and alignment will be checked with the big five MPS areas for professional development. It is also planned to align everything with a DPI-approved literacy plan.
 - The desired time line is for all to be in place by January 2010. The writing project piece will be ready to go in place in the fall and will be looked at as a pilot.
- The Family Literacy & Tutoring and the Skunkworks work groups have also been continuing their work.
- NEA Foundation Grant Update:
 - The 2008-09 NEA Focus Schools Data Celebration was held on May 23rd at the Wisconsin Club. Presentation of data on the work of the grant was given by Deb Lindsey, MPS Director of Research & Assessment, and information on the district literacy framework was shared by Catherine Thome, MPS Director of Educational Services. Student achievement is improving in many NEA Focus Schools in reading and math, some overall and some in specific grades. Several schools have growth (value-added tier) above the district average in reading as well as several schools having the same type of growth in math. Positive changes in school culture are also being experienced by students, staff and parents in many NEA Focus Schools.
 - The Assurant Health Foundation Sharing Session, *How To Increase Family Involvement* was conducted on May 30th at Karl Ratzsch Restaurant. Assurant Health Foundation supported schools (Audubon, Browning, Gaenslen, Green Bay Avenue, and Metcalfe) each shared lessons learned. More

than 50 were in attendance, and the president of the foundation was there to hear the reports from the schools.

- Conversation has continued concerning teacher leadership and development of the virtual community to support the efforts of the closing the achievement gaps work as well as to further develop the agenda for the NEA Foundation cross-site convening in the fall which will be held October 7-9, 2009.
- The external evaluator for the NEA Foundation Closing the Achievement Gaps initiative was in Milwaukee for a site visit on June 1-2, 2009. Visitors met with representatives of the MPA, MPS, MTEA, MMABSE and the TNE, NSF and NEA Foundation grants. School site visits were also conducted at two of the NEA Focus Schools—South Division High School and Browning Elementary School.
- The NEA Foundation Grant Principal Investigator presided over the MPS Hot Topics Institute on June 18th and facilitated one of the sessions.

The date of the next MPA Partners Meeting is TBD.

Our Mission

The purpose of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy (MPA) is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The broad initiative of the MPA is to ensure that every child in the Milwaukee Public Schools is performing at or above grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics through shared responsibility for student success. The framework for the initiative is balanced literacy and mathematics: a comprehensive literacy program that provides skill development across all curricular areas and focuses on reading, writing, listening, speaking, deep thinking, and research skills; a comprehensive mathematics program that provides students an understanding of mathematical concepts, an ability to accurately and appropriately compute, an ability to solve mathematical problems by applying concepts, an ability to provide reasoning to solutions to problems, and an ability to see mathematics as useful and doable.



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The MMP Messenger

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The goal of *The MMP Messenger* is to enhance communication and foster discussion among the Math Teacher Leader (MTL), the Principal, and the Learning Team. *MMP Messenger* is distributed following each MTL monthly meeting. Documents presented at the monthly MTL meetings can be accessed through the MPS portal or the MMP website at www.mmp.uwm.edu.

What a Ride! Our Leadership Journey

This last whirlwind MTL leadership session took the MTLs on a journey of their growth and understanding of the leadership sessions offered throughout the course of the year. They had time to reflect on the sessions that we offered around the PRIME framework and its assessment principle, systems thinking, CBAM, dissemination, and the wealth of research articles that we examined over the course of the year. MTLs came to see through revisiting big ideas from each of the prior sessions, the connections their leadership sessions had to the PRIME framework.

In regards to the Assessment Principle, MTLs participated in a self reflection on their leadership growth from September through May. They carefully constructed thoughtful responses about their biggest areas of leadership growth, both personally and with their school staffs. We will continue to support their growth and development as leaders and it will be exciting to work with the MTLs as they begin the 2009-2010 school year as true education leaders of mathematics.

Asking the Right Questions is the Key to Student Understanding at All Grade Levels

Hometown educator, Gail Burrill, currently of Michigan State University, led an MTL Special Session on May 26th. The featured activity was an observation of an algebraic reasoning lesson where Gail engaged 21 ninth grade students from Marshall Montessori IB in higher level thinking activities through a focus on questioning. She challenged the teacher participants to observe for and consider how questioning can move learning forward both as a vehicle to shape instruction in the moment of teaching and as a way to engage students in thinking and reasoning about the mathematics at hand.

Prior to the lesson observation Gail led participants through focused professional development around the questioning strategies from renowned researchers Black and Wiliam. Classroom video segments were carefully analyzed with a careful focus on the types of questions being asked by teachers and how to ask questions that promote reasoning and sense making on the part of the students.

As an MPS first, we were honored to have two National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Presidents at this event: Gail, herself, a former NCTM President and current President, Dr. Henry (Hank) Kepner.

This session is now available for viewing on the MPS Portal on Mediasite!

In Search of Algebraic Reasoning: Making Connections to Textbook Programs

MTLs have been on a year long journey exploring the development of algebraic reasoning. Throughout the year, they have engaged in conversations around four areas that support this development.

- Relational Thinking: Using number relationships to find an answer instead of computing out an answer.
- Operation Sense: Identifying which operation to use within a contextual situation.
- Patterning: Investigating recursive and functional thinking.
- Distributive Property: Using partial products and the open array model to support multiplicative thinking of large numbers.

These big mathematical ideas are found in all curricular materials yet are not often explicitly stated for teachers or students. Working in textbook groups, MTLs traced the development of the distributive property in their school's math program. They located where it was introduced, how the authors refer to it, and the instructional experiences students engage in to develop understanding of this property.

MTLs were surprised how intentional they needed to be in this search. They were intrigued to learn how different programs "grew" the idea of the distributive property. Critical conversations were held about their work next year when planning with teachers.

Make sure to let your MTL share this process with your learning team as you discuss plans to support your mathematics initiative for the 2009-2010 school year.

Constructed Response: ThinkLink Benchmark Identified growth in student understanding of mathematics

MTLs examined student work from the constructed response (CR) items on this year's final Benchmark Assessments. The MTLs participated in a session where they were asked to clarify key mathematics features in the prompt, study the task specific rubric, and provide feedback to inform instruction. Working through the session, the MTLs felt ready to guide school based scoring sessions on the constructed response prompts. Many were planning to analyzing student growth on the CR items given throughout the academic year.

Remember, formative assessment information analyzed around the constructed response items could prove insightful in the work regarding your school's new School Improvement Plan (S.I.P.).

Looking Ahead...

*MTL and Principal Retreat, Session A: June 24 & 25

Session B: June 29 & 30. Faxed registration deadline June 11.

* NSF forms due to your MTS on or before June 12, 2009!