Welcome to the Math in Common Homepage
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Math in Common Newsletters

Issue I - Spring 2014
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We've been Tweeting!

@mathincommon

MISSION

The Math in Common Community of Practice offers the time, tools, and expertise for education leaders to work together, in and across districts, to advance student success in mathematics.

VISION

All Math in Common districts are achieving their visions of student success in mathematics.

What is Math in Common? Ten school districts in California have been awarded significant support from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation to help the transition to the Common Core State Standards for Math (CCSS-M) in grades K-8. These districts will become leaders in the statewide transition to the CCSS-M, and participate in a learning community where they share plans, lessons learned, and tools with other grantee districts and statewide.
California’s adoption of the new Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSS-M), which emphasize critical thinking and problem-solving, has the potential to transform student learning in mathematics. Ensuring that educators are working with the knowledge and resources to integrate these standards is key to success. Research in the education field uncovered priority needs for the state’s educational practitioners and leaders, and led the Foundation to recognize the value of supporting school districts in implementing inquiry-based teaching aligned to CCSS-M.

Through the Math in Common™ initiative, ten school districts serving over 300,000 California youth are leading the way by developing and enacting thoughtful plans to implement Common Core State Standards for Mathematics in grades K–8. Math in Common is supported by three partners: California Education Partners (Community of Practice), WestEd (research and evaluation), and the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation (funding).

Over a five-year period, participating districts are helping their educators address the new standards by:

- Providing professional development opportunities to support strong instructional practices;
- Aligning instructional materials to the higher demands of CCSS-M;
- Building leadership capacity throughout the participating districts; and
- Developing strong evaluation plans, including formative and summative measures.

Together, these districts are part of a Community of Practice in which they share their progress and successes, as well as their challenges and lessons learned.

Community of Practice

Teams of district leaders from the 10 Math in Common districts designed and launched a collaborative community of practice to help refine and share their CCSS-M implementations. Through quarterly meetings, peer-led learning seminars, cross-district site consultancies, and shared expert engagement, the district teams are building true collaborative relationships and building their leadership capacities in this time of great change. They have committed to the following objectives over the next two years:

A) VISION (Student Achievement in Mathematics): Each district will:
   i) develop and implement a shared, coherent, non-negotiable and compelling vision for mathematics instruction and assessment,
   ii) be able to demonstrate progress towards a district-wide understanding of that vision, and
   iii) establish and describe a multi-tiered evidence-gathering program that advances the math vision.

B) PROCESS (Leadership Capacity and Coherence): Each district will be able to:
   i) identify and teach the components of its approach to building instructional leaders’ and teachers’ capacity to lead change;
   ii) identify the primary reasons this approach is effective; and
   iii) connect and align this approach to support its vision for instruction and assessment.

C) CONTENT (Supporting Instructional Shifts through Formative Development): Each district will have:
   i) articulated and refined a clear formative assessment cycle to support teacher instructional shifts;
   ii) developed associated tools and rubrics to support that cycle and its related instructional needs (curricular and otherwise); and
   iii) supported all teachers in deepening the use of a formative assessment cycle to catalyze shifts in instructional practice.

D) INNOVATION (Design Thinking and Supporting Innovation): Each district will
   i) develop and share at least one innovative (technology-based) approach to CCSS-M implementation; and
   ii) provide learning about how that approach has impacted desired outcomes for CCSS-M implementation.

Why a Community of Practice Structure?

1. The principles upon which CCSS are based apply to adults as well as younger learners: the most effective way to learn is through discussion, productive struggle, and directed inquiry.
2. There are efficiencies to be found in a group: experts (both among us and external to our group) can contribute knowledge and best practices; their perspectives, tools, strategies, and content knowledge can be commonly shared and more quickly applied through our community than on a case by case basis. Why invent the wheel individually?
3. By having time to spend together we will improve on one another’s ideas, through interactions with colleagues.
4. New knowledge is built through discussion and application to common problems.
5. We can accelerate and sustain positive changes in our systems by building reciprocal accountability, through peer-to-peer relationships.

At the center of the CoP are quarterly Leadership Meetings of the district math and central office leadership teams. These convenings focus on shared CCSS-M goals and a cycle of inquiry that helps participants move with peer feedback and accountability toward those goals.

In response to district need, we design Opt-In Opportunities for professional development and collaboration that math leads can share with a broader audience in her/his district. These include: Peer Led Learning sessions, in which one district engages with others in the community around a strength or success in their implementation; Site Consultancies give teams a chance to invite others from the community onto their sites and in their classrooms to workshop a problem of practice, and; Design and Innovation labs targeted to those inspired by the challenge and opportunity classroom technology provides in the implementation of the CCSS-M.

In response to district demand, the MiC CoP also holds an annual Summer Principal Institute to provide a venue for these vital district leaders to engage with the CCSS-M implementation process and learning of the community.

In addition, we have engaged a key set of consultants, not only to provide learning for the entire community, but to engage with districts in one-on-one consultancies as needed. These experts include:

- Michael Fullan (change management)
- Tim Kanold (math leadership)
- Dylan Wiliam (formative assessment)
- Jo Boaler (math instruction and equity)
- Shelbi Cole (SBAC assessment)
- Kenji Hakuta (ELL and CCSS)

Additional experts are identified through conversations with districts about their needs and current partners.