

CASE STUDY

Implementing an Effective Literacy Block with Scholastic's Help

Jeffco Public Schools in Golden, CO, started using a new reading resource for 44 of its elementary schools in 2008-09. They hoped it would help teachers implement a complete literacy block including whole and small group instruction as well as independent reading. When Laura Munro, Executive Director of



the Jeffco Department of Diverse Learners, visited the schools, she noticed that the classrooms did not have the variety of books necessary to engage students in high-quality independent reading. While the guided reading texts were often used for practice, the district wanted students to have other reading options that matched their interest level and the curriculum.

"While students are learning how to read," said Ms. Munro, "we wanted them to have access to content from social studies and science represented in books they could read independently."

To help address this need, Ms. Munro consulted her Scholastic Account Executive, who she had worked with in the past to find books for migrant and ESL students. He helped align funding that they had with the libraries that matched their need for independent reading in the content areas as well as training to support their use in each classroom.

"What is great about Scholastic is they walk the talk," said Ms. Munro. "They work with well-known authors backed by research and invest in programs that match."

Training was essential. When the libraries arrived, literacy coaches from across the district were trained about what was in the libraries, text levels, how they can be used, etc. But Jeffco also invested in follow-up training. After teachers had been using the libraries, Scholastic consultants came to each individual school to clarify teachers' understanding and further coach them in implementing independent reading.

Ms. Munro said, "We discovered that teachers had a good understanding of the literacy block and what to do for whole and small group instruction, but they didn't always realize that independent reading still needed a level of focused instruction. Having reading material in the classroom was great, but teachers needed more support and structure."

Scholastic consultants worked with teachers so they knew how to:

- *Identify effective independent reading*
- *Ensure students were selecting the right books at the right level*
- *Collect data about that part of the day*
- *Monitor students*
- *Conduct reading conferences*
- *And much more*

For the upcoming school year, Jeffco is planning a more customized approach to professional development to address the specific needs of each school.

As a result Ms. Munro said, "We're able to go into schools and see a more complete literacy block being implemented – whole & small group, and independent reading. Having the reading material and professional development from Scholastic helped us get there."

CASE STUDY

Durham Public Schools Improve Student Achievement

In December of 2008, the former Superintendent of Durham Public Schools in North Carolina identified three low performing middle schools that needed a significant amount of intensive intervention. The plan, called the Accelerated Double Dose Model, infused an intervention period within the school day for all students reading below grade level. With an additional 45 minutes of language arts instruction every day, students got a “double dose” to fill the gaps they had.

In a short period of time, Anna Frost, Director of Secondary English



Language Arts and Literacy, evaluated a multitude of programs and curricula. Her primary criteria were based on the research of Dr. Robert Marzano where the greatest impact on student

achievement lies in building background knowledge and vocabulary.

Before Ms. Frost started her search, Dr. Cathy Collins Block and Dr. John Mangieri, nationally renowned researchers and authors of *Powerful Vocabulary* and *Word Forward*, visited Durham for a professional development mini-institute on vocabulary. This prompted Ms. Frost to review their programs, which she ultimately chose. By combining *Powerful Vocabulary* and *Word Forward*, both background knowledge and vocabulary instruction were addressed. “Unlike any other vocabulary program, the two programs provide students with the tools needed to independently make meaning from unfamiliar words, thus increasing a student’s word bank exponentially,” said Ms. Frost.

Implementation began in January of 2009. Data analysis determined the target groups of students, who were matched with teachers. Initial program implementation training was conducted by Scholastic Literacy Consultants so educators understood the programs and how to use them both effectively.

Scholastic then followed up with classroom observations and coaching for

identified teachers. They also supported the Academic Coaches in each school responsible for working with teachers and ensuring the fidelity of implementation.

“Scholastic Classroom and Library Group has played an integral role in improving instructional delivery, building teacher capacity in the discipline of literacy, and increasing student achievement in Durham Public Schools,” said Ms. Frost. “I attribute the success of the Double Dose Model directly to the ongoing support provided by Scholastic. Scholastic has provided the district with exemplary ongoing professional development by experts in the field of literacy and continuous oversight of district programs. In fact, Scholastic has gone above and beyond to ensure fidelity to the implementation of the Double Dose Model.”

The results have been impressive. In the first year of implementation the rate of improved growth for the students in the schools using the Double Dose Model was almost double compared to schools without the model. Based on the end-of-grade reading test scores, the three schools were ranked 1st, 2nd, and 5th for their increase in reading scores out of the 10 middle schools in the district.

In 2009-10, Durham Public Schools expanded the program to all 10 middle schools. Ms. Frost says that she “look[s] forward to continuing our collaborative professional relationship between Durham Public School and Scholastic with the underlying commitment to student achievement and building teacher capacity in the discipline of literacy.”