

LYON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Staff Travel Report
to
School Board of Trustees*

Your recent request to travel has been approved. Within two weeks of the date of the conference, the following report is due in the office of the Deputy Superintendent via Margaret Heim.

Please Download & TYPE the following information.

Staff Member: Damon Etter

Conference: Learning Forward

Location of Conference: Denver, Colorado

School: District Office

Staff Assignment: Professional Development and Data Manager

Dates Attended: December 8th - 11th, 2024

General Overview:

The Learning Forward Conference brings together thought leaders, experts, researchers, and other practitioners to collaboratively share the latest learnings, knowledge, and techniques. The Learning Forward Conference models deep learning and best practices so you can take them back to lead learning in your schools, districts, or systems.

How will this impact student learning in a positive way?

My goal in attending this conference was to acquire strategies that support new teachers in the education profession, aiming to enhance student achievement, improve teacher retention, and foster professional growth. To achieve this, I attended the following sessions;

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Mentoring New Teachers: A Learning Cycle Approach:

- During this session, the presenters introduced a well-researched systematic structure implemented both in the United States and internationally. The system began by identifying key mentor attributes. I plan to use this attribute chart to create a self-reflection tool for our teacher leaders, helping them to reflect on and enhance their leadership practices.

The presentation also covered the phases of a first-year teacher and their evolving attitudes toward teaching. I aim to use this phase chart with our new teachers to reassure them that their experiences are common in the educational field.

Additionally, the presenters shared a mentor cycle, which I believe will be beneficial for our Teacher Leaders in supporting new teachers. This cycle will help build a stronger foundation for professional growth.

The session also addressed how to engage in "opportunity" conversations, providing strategies for having challenging yet constructive discussions with new staff.

Inspired by this session, I have begun developing a Lyon County School District coaching guidebook. This resource will support our Teacher Leaders by offering straightforward yet impactful coaching strategies.

Sit and Get Will Not Grow Dendrites:

- This was by far the best session I attended. Marcia Tate presented 20 strategies for engaging students in the classroom, linking these techniques to neurological pathway development and supporting them with sound research in brain science. I found this session to be a valuable addition to our current "How the Brain Learns" initiatives in Lyon County School District. I plan to collaborate with a site principal to implement these strategies in a classroom setting and monitor their impact on teacher instruction.

Supporting and Equipping Brand New Teachers:

- In this session, professional development managers from Dallas, Texas, shared their system for supporting new teachers in their district. They offer both district and campus-level support. I noticed similarities to our structure but appreciated their approach of providing district and campus support to teachers with 0 to 2 years of experience, while those with 3 or more years receive only campus-level support. This presentation prompted me to consider collaborating more closely with our human resources department to better identify the experience levels of our staff and monitor retention data, ultimately enhancing our efforts to maintain consistent instructional practices.

Video Coaching:

- In this session, a school district from Yuma, Arizona, shared their approach to coaching new teachers through video reflection. They utilized the Danielson Framework as a rubric-like system to guide reflection and set coaching goals. The presenters showcased video evidence of teacher reflections and the positive impact on their instruction. I appreciated seeing how other school districts support educators in reflecting on their practice.

Leveraging Coaching for School and District Improvement:

- In this session, Joellen Killion from Learning Forward discussed her work with school districts to enhance student learning and outcomes. My key takeaway was the insight that, when implementing new initiatives, not all organizational levels are present to define their roles and actions. Ms. Killion provided a structured approach to facilitate initiative implementation, supported by documentation from her work with other districts. She also linked these strategies to school improvement plans and data monitoring systems.

Just Give Striving Readers a Comprehensive Assessment:

- In this session, a representative from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) discussed Scarborough's Rope and emphasized the significance of foundational reading skills in developing reading fluency and comprehension. The presenter shared a recent study focused on supporting students from sixth grade and up in enhancing foundational reading skills within the general education

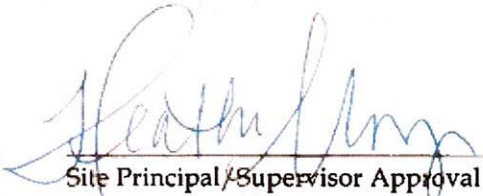
classroom. This intervention implemented daily for 20 minutes, showed improvements in fluency and comprehension for students scoring below the 50th percentile on the NWEA growth assessment.

How will I implement what I learned and how will I share this information with my colleagues?

- I plan on using the resources from "Mentoring New Teachers: A Learning Cycle Approach" to develop a coaching guidebook to support the work our Teacher Leaders are doing.
- I plan to use the resources from "Supporting and Equipping Brand New Teachers" to better define what constitutes a new teacher, identify the appropriate level of support needed, and utilize the phases of teaching to effectively support our educators.
- I plan to use the "Video Coaching" session resources to reinforce our work with educators as they use video recordings to reflect on their instructional practices.
- I plan to implement the "Just Give Striving Readers a Comprehensive Assessment" study in an ELA classroom to evaluate its impact on our student achievement scores.

Other Comments:

- Thank you for the opportunity to attend this conference and collaborate with other educators from around the nation.
- I wanted to share one of my favorite quotes from a Keynote speaker, "We are not seeking perfection, we are seeking reflection". It reminded me that all of us are not perfect, but we should always be reflecting on the work with are doing to always do what is best for kids.

 _____ Date 12/13/24

Site Principal/Supervisor Approval

Date

 _____ Date 12/16/24

Deputy Superintendent Approval

Date