

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

Missoula County Moves Forward with *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*

Educators at Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) in Montana take great pride in their district's commitment to helping students become "forward thinking" and "high achieving." Indeed, MCPS' pledge to excellence was why this district decided to explore ways it could improve math instruction at the elementary level in 2018.

Dr. Elise Guest, MCPS' director of curriculum and instruction, and Katie LaPointe, instructional coach, were charged with leading the search for a rigorous math curriculum. Their efforts began with an audit of the district's math materials that revealed just how inconsistent the resources teachers relied on were. Guest and LaPointe quickly realized that if MCPS wanted to ensure all students had access to a high-quality curriculum, they'd need to prioritize the implementation of standards-aligned resources that would work for all teachers.

Guest created a task force to evaluate math instructional program options. When two programs from Curriculum Associates, *i-Ready Assessment* and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*, were brought to the task force members, their interest was piqued. "[The] materials were robust, rigorous, standards based, and included mathematical practices we were looking for," Guest said.

Missoula
County Public
Schools



STUDENTS
9,105

GRADES
K-12

TITLE I
15%

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What They Did

In 2019, the MCPS Board of Trustees unanimously approved the adoption of *i-Ready Assessment*, Curriculum Associates' integrated formative assessment and instruction program, and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*, a comprehensive core mathematics program, in Grades K–5 across nine elementary schools.

Guest knew it was important to begin implementation of the new programs with professional development (PD) that would help educators understand the pedagogy of *i-Ready Assessment* and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*.

A full year ahead of adoption, MCPS educators began receiving training that included the following:

“When you put a rigorous, rich, standards-based curriculum in front of kids and you give teachers the tools to deliver that material with sound instructional practices, your kids will respond and rise to the occasion.”

—Dr. Elise Guest,
Director of Curriculum
and Instruction



Math Discourse

Lloyd Jones, an executive director of content and implementation at Curriculum Associates, was the first to work with MCPS. “I don’t think any of us realized it at the time, but [Jones] was showing us how to teach math,” LaPointe said. The training included an understanding of pedagogy and math discourse, among other topics, and it “was a fun, engaging, and meaningful introduction to our whole math adoption,” she added.



Standards Progression

Liz Peyser, a national director of content and implementation at Curriculum Associates, coached MCPS educators on how to connect new practices to math content and specifically focused on scaffolds and standards progression. “She showed teachers at each individual grade level how the math they’re teaching connects to the other grade levels,” LaPointe said. “It really established the through lines for us and was a lovely a-ha moment for teachers.”



Instructional Materials

KymBerlyn Farrugia, a PD consultant, worked with educators virtually once COVID-19 restrictions set in during spring 2020. “She introduced us to all of the instructional materials and helped us understand how our learning from the previous [PD] was all reflected in the materials,” Guest said. “It took the mystery out of the physical materials teachers would be working with and quickly prepared our early adopter schools that began using *i-Ready [Assessment]* and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* immediately.”



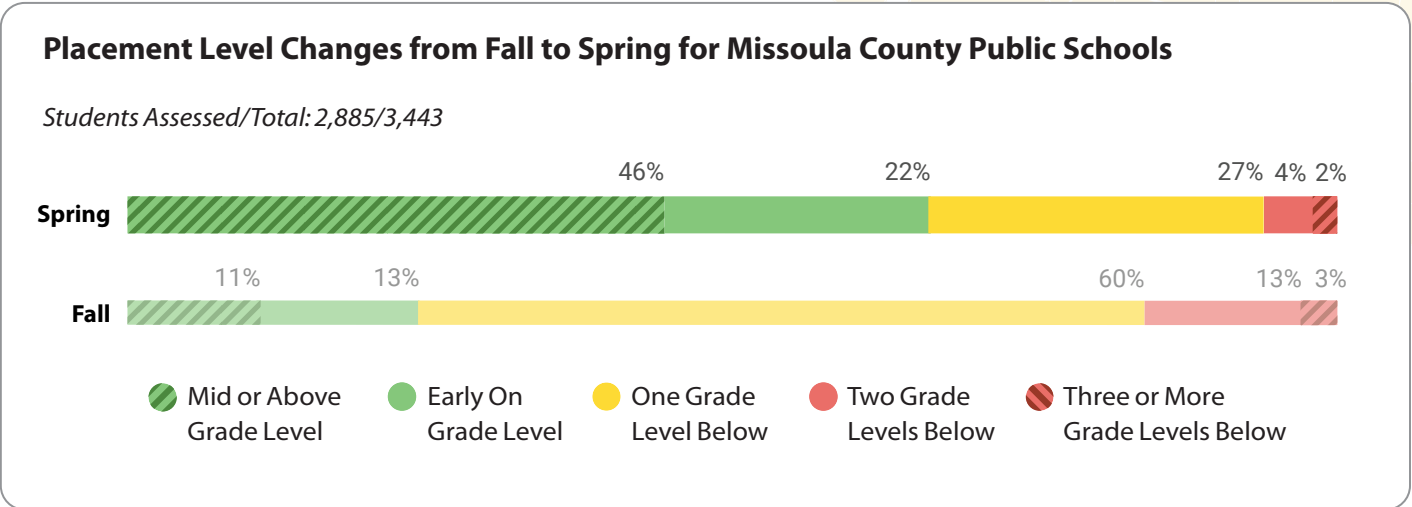
Ongoing PD

To foster continued growth, MCPS offered ongoing PD, in which LaPointe played a critical role by delivering support to individual faculty members. For teachers who were worried that decreased in-person face time with students would limit their effectiveness, she reinforced that they had great resources to work with, as well as the strong support of the Curriculum and Instruction department.

What They Accomplished

As it became clear the pandemic would continue into the 2020–2021 school year, MCPS leaders asked school principals if the math adoption should be delayed. The principals responded that their teachers were ready. “That was a huge, pivotal moment for those principals to be confident as instructional leaders, to know that they’d had the right support and training and that they were completely ready to launch,” Guest said.

Because of the work the district put in ahead of the formal adoption, in terms of providing professional learning opportunities and building buy-in among teachers, the math implementation was an enormous success, with impressive growth data from fall 2020 to spring 2021.



As Guest and LaPointe look at the future, they are excited about the many ways educators will be able to continue using *i-Ready Assessment* and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* to enhance math instruction and increase student learning success. “We’ll be able to dig into small group instruction, do more differentiation, and have kids sharing the Learning Games,” LaPointe said.

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