

A District Engages in the Five Practices

1 Melanie Cifonelli: We've been working with Peg Smith for three years. And it's-- it has been
2 quite a journey. Our first year was primarily face-to-face professional
3 development, where teachers really were engaged and immersed in the
4 five practices. Every time we met, Peg actually conducted mathematics
5 lessons using the five practices. And the interesting part about that is while
6 we were immersed in the lesson as students, we were building not only our
7 content knowledge, but our pedagogical knowledge as well.

8 The PD sessions really combine those two pieces, which I feel was a huge
9 piece of moving our work forward. The teachers that we were working
10 with were teachers in grades 6 through 8. And our seventh and eighth
11 grade teachers have a mathematics degree. Our sixth grade teachers do
12 not. So, it was a really nice blend of really building our content knowledge
13 while thinking about instructional practices that we can move into the
14 classroom.

15 The other nice piece was-- is that we started in small pieces. It was really
16 a-- give it a go. Here are some tasks to try. Go in your classroom. And
17 give it a go. So, a part of every one of our professional development
18 sessions, we had case stories. So, when teachers would give it a go in their
19 classroom, they would bring back samples of student work. This was
20 hugely important. You could see the pride in teachers that they gave it a
21 go in their classroom and they tried out a task. But they also started really
22 thinking about, what is it that my students are demonstrating to me and
23 really understanding about the mathematics? And what I noticed over the
24 three years of work is our conversations became more sophisticated.

25 When I think about the conversations in the beginning, they were, did our
26 students get it or did they not get it? We are now at the point where we're
27 really talking about where are our students in the trajectory of learning
28 based on what we're seeing and how can I push students forward? How
29 can I move them on their path, depending on where they are currently?