



Teacher Leader Fellowship Impact Report



2019-2020¹



DLC Teacher Leader Fellowship

We know that teachers of students with disabilities and English learners are often one of a few in their schools, lack access to adequate support and development opportunities, and as a result, experience high rates of burnout. The DLC Teacher Leader Fellowship exists to connect teachers to relevant professional growth experiences, resources, and networks to propel best practice for diverse learners and increase teacher efficacy.

THE FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE



4-day Summer Session



Quarterly Growth Sessions



Mentor Site-Visits



Peer School Visits



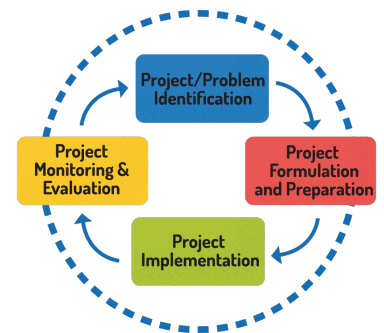
Mini-cohorts + Events



Impact Project

FELLOW IMPACT PROJECT

In order to improve quality of diverse learner programming, fellows had the opportunity to design and implement a solution to better serve diverse learners in their setting. Fellows conducted a needs assessment to identify a barrier to diverse learner success, researched possible solutions, designed a plan for addressing the barrier, and implemented their plan. This process necessarily includes collaboration with school leaders and other team members. Fellows presented their projects, findings, and reflections at a Virtual End of Year Expo.



Upon completion of the Teacher Leader Fellowship, leaders are equipped to:

- Impact diverse learner outcomes
- Lead other teachers and team members
- Influence school programming and practice



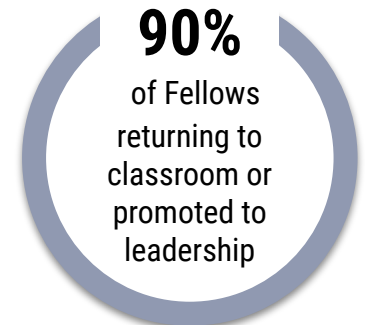
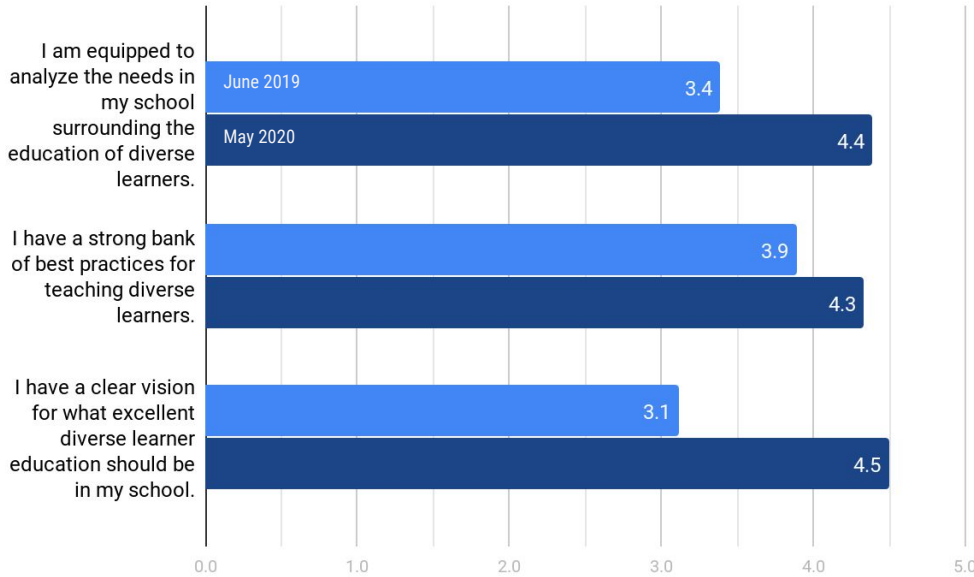
The 21 DLC Fellows represented 7 charter schools and 9 traditional schools. The class was comprised of 8 EL teachers, 8 special education teachers, and 5 support coordinators with experience ranging from 3 to 30 years.



Measures of Impact

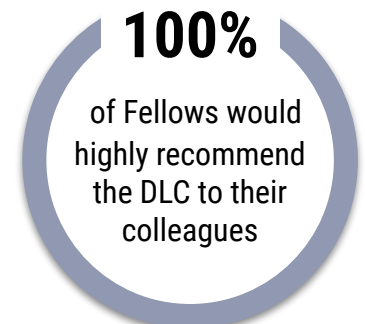
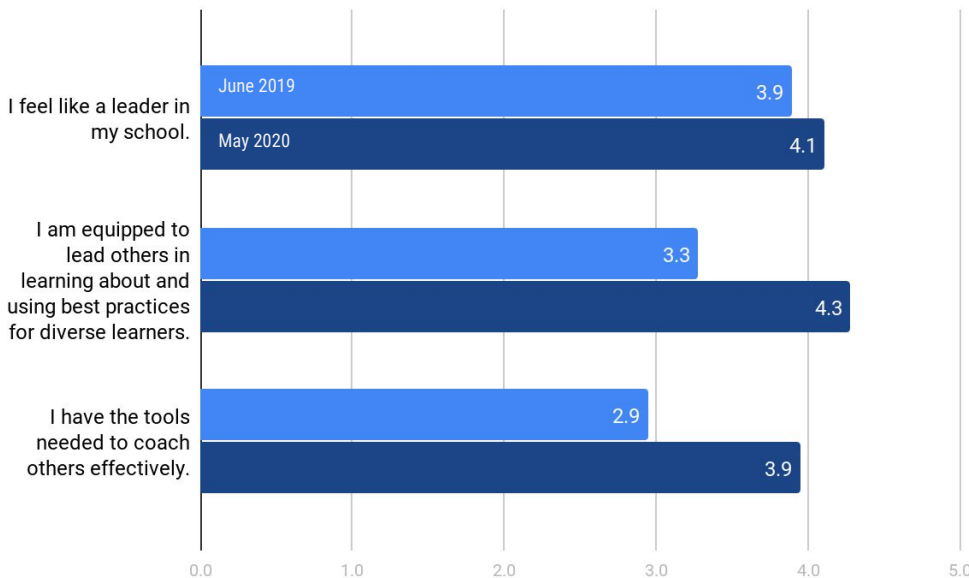
John Hattie's Visible Learning cites *Collective Teacher Efficacy* as the **number one factor** in positively influencing student achievement. Through this experience, we hoped to see Fellows grow in the skills to not only meet the needs of diverse learners they serve, but lead others to do the same. In analyzing data from beginning and end of year surveys, it is clear that Fellows feel more confident to lead change for diverse learners in their schools.

Fellow Identities as Effective Educators



**1 Fellow retiring & 1 Fellow continuing to pursue further degree in special education*

Fellow Identities as Effective Leaders



I honestly don't think I would have made it through the school year without the Fellowship community and resources.

I truly feel prepared to walk into any classroom and assess the needs of students, coach teachers, and improve the systems at my school as a whole.



Fellows identified growth in their sense of **connectedness, efficacy,** and **agency** to inspire better outcomes for diverse learners.



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Fellows enacted solutions to better serve diverse learners in each of their schools this year through the implementation of Impact Projects. With the support of their school leadership and colleagues, Fellows strategically addressed a variety of areas for growth. Below, projects are listed by topic. A full read of any project demonstrates the wide-reaching positive effects of equipping teachers with best practices and leadership skills.

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Abiola Patterson Williams

Special Education Coordinator

Purpose Preparatory Academy



Accommodating Traditional Writing Assessments by Providing Computer-Based Learning Solutions

The need that was identified through my initial research and assessment was that a specific scholar was struggling with writing legibly on class assignments. He wasn't able to press down hard on his writing utensil to create his writing due to fine motor deficits. It affected the diverse learner at my school greatly because he wasn't able to keep up with the writing that was taking place in the classroom, and the most crucial thing for scholars is to access the curriculum to the best of their abilities.

I worked with my administrators to design a solution to meet the needs of this scholar. We purchased and provided him with a personal computer device so that he was able to access materials and complete work. At first, we let him use the device to write his name since it had touch screen capabilities. Moving forward, the computer is going to be used for testing in every capacity. For example, classroom tests will be read through the computer by a live person, and he can listen to and make his answer choice by touching the computer screen. The process will also allow him only two answer choices in larger formatting for improved viewing. All of his testing will be computer-based from here on out for this scholar, and the team is working to adapt all classwork materials as well for this device. This plan was in the process of implementation when COVID-19 shut the building down, but the scholar now has access to this device during closure and for next year.

The impact the computer-based solution will have on the diverse learners in the school will be significant. As teachers, we're not making things convenient or "easier" for the scholar, but more accessible and designed to meet his needs. Our diverse learners understand we are there for them, and we are willing to go the extra mile to make sure they get what they need to be successful all the way through. The impact will continue into next year and beyond because it was a choice we made as a school to make sure the scholars are successful in life. When the focus is on the students, it is not a hard choice to make.

The DLC fellowship has made a tremendous impact on my professional practice this year. It allowed me to be a lot more vocal about what scholars need, beyond what I had been saying already. I'm able to be more intentional around what I need for the students and not what I want. I look at things from a different perspective now. Exceptional education scholars aren't much different; they just do things differently. It was imperative to me that I walk away with a solid foundation for fighting for the pupils every day. I'm forever grateful for this opportunity.

"It was imperative to me that I walk away with a solid foundation for fighting for the pupils every day. I'm forever grateful for this opportunity."

-Abiola Patterson Williams, DLC Fellow



Amanda Loreman
Dean of Student Supports
Intrepid College Prep



A School-Wide Tiered Behavior Intervention System

This year, I decided to focus on our diverse learners who were dual-identified students (meaning they are English learners who also have an identified disability) to see how they could be better supported at our school. In 5th and 6th grade specifically, I noticed that our dual-identified students had significantly higher numbers of behavioral incidents, which resulted in demerits, referrals, detentions served, in-school (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS). This meant that these diverse learners, who typically have larger academic gaps compared to general education peers, were missing considerably more academic time in general education classrooms due to behavior.

A two pronged need was identified. First, dual-identified students needed to spend more time in class to receive core academic content that would help them attain IEP goals as well as grade level standards. Second, the behavior interventions that were already in place for these students were not being implemented systematically in numerous ways. Therefore, we needed to improve our methods for behavior intervention in order to increase the time students remained in class.

The solution I designed for my project was a school-wide tiered behavior intervention system with clear parameters of how students would be identified for more intensive support, as well as consistent methods for analyzing the effectiveness of implemented interventions. The parameters needed to be both time-based and frequency-based. For example, a specific number of OSS days would trigger an alert that a student may be close to or in need of increased behavior support. Once the incident is reviewed by a team of stakeholders, the student will move Tiers and be provided with a targeted intervention. Then, using time-based criteria, the team will set a date for when to review the student's progress with an intervention. This would ensure that we are tracking and measuring levels of effectiveness, to determine whether resources being utilized are in fact benefitting the student by reducing frequency of behavior.

This system will also be differentiated for our EE students, especially those who are transitioning ELs, by analyzing behavior incidents (rather than specific number of days out) since their behavior data indicated more frequent incidents. This will help teams take a more holistic approach to analyzing an EE student's needs across behavior, academics, and emotional areas. Finally, if a student is moved to a more intensive support tier, the team must have a family meeting to establish a clear channel of communication about the student's needs.



This would include setting the next date to re-evaluate the current plan as well as making addendums to any current support plans (IEPs or ILPs) to indicate the support that will be provided in the meantime.

To tackle the issue of students spending time outside of class, I redesigned what support looks like at the Tier 1 level. Specifically, I outlined a deeper review process that will help teachers collaboratively identify trends in behavior for individual students and devise plans early on, rather than reactively. Previously, some stakeholders (whether parents or EE or EL support teachers) were not aware of behavior issues happening across different classes. Moving forward, our general education teachers will meet biweekly with EE and EL teachers to identify and discuss challenges they are having in the classroom. The idea is that EE and EL teachers will be equipped to provide specialized strategies that enhance instruction and/or improve behavior. The team will observe the effects of these strategies for two weeks before deciding next steps; at this point, they will decide whether the student should move to a new Tier and if so will make a plan to loop in the family. This will help students stay in the classroom for greater amounts of time because teachers will be figuring out what works across classes, using data to apply interventions or accommodations more consistently, and ensure that no one is working in a “silo”. Parents will also be more informed of interventions that the school is providing, which will need to greater buy in and support.

While my progress with implementing this system was interrupted by closures, there was definitely an impact on the student support and culture teams’ collaboration this year. I believe that this project will continue to make an impact for students in all grades next school year for several reasons. First, it will require parents and teachers to gather together to share input on the levels of support provided at school. Parents are our biggest allies, and so making all stakeholders aware and involved in intervention implementation will build trust and accountability while increasing success. Second, we will be using and analyzing data more effectively to determine how well interventions are working for our diverse learners. This means that collected data will drive decisions on what students need *in* the classroom, to proactively support them and decrease the number of behavioral infractions at all levels. Finally, our goal will remain focused on increasing academic minutes for diverse learners by helping them stay in class. We have been and will continue to provide targeted training for teachers around behavior functions and how interventions can support students in the classroom. This builds the capacity of *all* staff members to impact change for students.

“The DLC Fellowship provided me with an opportunity to collaborate across both charter and MNPS schools with educators and professionals that are doing the same work with diverse learners, but in different settings - it inspired us to generate and share ideas, together.”

-Amanda Loreman, DLC Fellow

The DLC Fellowship provided me with an opportunity to collaborate across both charter and MNPS schools with educators and professionals that are doing the same work with diverse learners, but in different settings - it inspired us to generate and share ideas, together. This forum gave me a renewed energy to continue implementing resources because it served as a reminder that progress could be made. It became an outlet for sharing small wins, ones that may sometimes be overlooked when the audience doesn’t understand the impact of a small win with diverse learners.



Ann Martin

E.L.L. 5th-8th Grade

Bellevue Middle School



Schoology for Individualization

I am the only ELL teacher at Bellevue Middle School. I serve approximately 30 students grade 5-8. This year I had 6 students with IEP's (1-5th grade, 1-6th grade, 3-7th grade, 1-8th grade.) Also, I had 2 newcomers. One in 5th grade and one in 6th grade. I realized that I had to individualize instruction using MAP data during PLT time in order to meet their needs. Schoology was the answer.

I was able to create individual assignments for students. Also, I used the immersive reader feature in Word to translate articles for the students whose L1 were Portuguese and Spanish. All students received assignments to fill some of their gaps and to reinforce academic vocabulary. Also, it was a private way to help a students review skills that he/she missed in elementary school. The solution for filling the gaps was to use Schoology. I used MAP data to identify skills to re-teach or introduce. I consulted with our tech teacher, Ms. Sinha. She helped me learn the basics and she co-taught with me.

Another solution was soliciting volunteers from the Bellevue Community. In January an article ran in the Westmeade News. I had 6 people respond. The volunteers met the students before making a commitment. We had just started a regular schedule when the pandemic hit. I hope to be able to use volunteers using Zoom next year.

This project actually had a big impact on me! It made me feel more effective. Students could immediately get started on their work in Schoology when they entered class. Our PLT time was only 45 minutes so every minute counted. Students enjoyed the discussion feature in Schoology and it encouraged them to write coherently. Also, teachers would give me topics that they wanted reinforced with certain students. I could easily assign a video or online book for the student to read.

I was very excited about the number of volunteers that I had lined up. The students LOVED the special attention they received and were so appreciative. It was a win-win situation for everyone!

"The DLC Fellowship helped me dive into technology. My technology skills have grown, and I hope to be able to assist other teachers now that we are all using Schoology."

-Ann Martin, DLC Fellow

Little did I know that we would be using Schoology for Remote Learning during the pandemic. I am very excited about moving past the basic stage of Schoology. Next year I want to incorporate more assessments and I also want to use the video recording aspect. This past year I used Flipgrid for practicing speaking. I think I can integrate Flipgrid and the video feature in Schoology. Next year I also look forward to more collaboration with content area teachers. Teachers can add me to their courses and I can add materials to support the EE/ELL students. This will be very powerful! I will try to utilize volunteers next year virtually until the pandemic is over.

The DLC Fellowship helped me dive into technology. My technology skills have grown and I hope to be able to assist other teachers now that we are all using Schoology. I felt supported by my peers and it was good to know we all share the same struggles as we try to continually improve our schools.



Caroline Montgomery

English Learners Teacher

East End Prep



Second Grade Comprehension

Three years ago, a group of teachers at East End Prep identified a need for systematic phonics instruction catered towards diverse learners and implemented the Orton Gillingham method after receiving training from IMSE. This program has proven incredibly effective over the years in students' reading fluency and accuracy data. While tracking the effectiveness of phonics instruction, the gap began to widen in reading comprehension achievement, particularly among diverse learners. At the start of the 2020-2021 school year, students with IEPs and EL students consistently did not pass reading levels due to comprehension scores, and many of these students achieved poorly in the classroom on daily comprehension assignments. The accommodations provided to the EL students did not meet their needs. Lindsey Barnes and I identified these two areas as needs for the implementation of new methods of comprehension instruction.

We asked the following question to anchor our research and data analysis, "How can we improve small group reading instruction to bridge the gap in reading comprehension for students with identified disabilities in reading comprehension (specifically students with language Impairments and Autism) and dual identified students (ELLs who also have an identified disability that affects comprehension)?" as well as, "How do we accommodate Tier 1 Comprehension instruction to best meet the needs of Tier 4 learners?"

Once we identified these two areas of growth in comprehension for our students, Lindsey spearheaded the small-group comprehension instruction centered on fiction text, and I took on the project of accommodating comprehension instruction for EL students in second grade. Due to our two-teacher model in the classroom, accommodated lessons can be taught by the second teacher in the classroom. We wanted to create a systematic, patterned approach of comprehension instruction that could enhance students' abilities to access new information while spending less time processing the logistics of the lesson and more time processing the vocabulary and meaning of the text.

Lessons were accommodated with a repeated format focused on essential vocabulary, visualization, and guided inferences for a Women's History Month nonfiction unit starting March 2, 2020. For this biographical nonfiction unit, each lesson begins with a photograph and brainstorm of an essential element of that day's text selection that is crucial to students' comprehension. Guided questions are provided for each picture to access students' background knowledge and to prompt their thinking. Next, students follow the same process for reading and note-taking of nonfiction text during each lesson that includes both writing and drawing pictures. Additionally, one crucial vocabulary word is introduced during this section of instruction that is continually repeated and the definition is applied throughout the remainder of the lesson. This word also informs students' writing and/or discussion at the end of the lesson.



What do you notice in this picture?

Where are the people? What are they doing? How do you think they might feel?

Where are children during the day, now, in 2020?

Lesson Detail		
Part of Lesson	Roadmap of Questions and Teacher Moves	Teacher Notes to Prepare to Teach
Framing	<p>Let's review, What word best describes Mary McLeod Bethune? Why?</p> <p>(Mary McLeod was determined to impact the world beyond schools, Mary started a hospital in Daytona Beach, Florida. She was outraged when one of her black students was brought to a white hospital and refused medical treatment.)</p> <p>Show picture to the group: Give a copy of the picture to each student. Prompt with the questions below the picture. Discuss what students see and notice for 3-5 minutes. (Purpose is to build background knowledge and provide students context of MMB's life experiences)</p> <p>Give paper with boxes to students. Look at word at bottom of the page, "Advocate". Read word and briefly explain what the word means from the definition & note that we will see examples of this in the text.</p>	<p>Note potential scholar misunderstandings and BPOs to use:</p> <p><Insert additional (class specific) what/how and/or love of text statement here</p>
Read Aloud	<p><u>After Page 26</u></p> <p>Circle which period of MMB's life this section of text is from? (adult)</p> <p>Question: What have we learned in this section of the text? STOP and write down details in the box that connect to the first part of text: Examples:</p>	<p>Note potential scholar misunderstandings and other BPOs to use :</p>

“Due to the DLC Fellowship, I had motivation to dig deeper into my teaching practice and think holistically about EL instruction at East End Prep. As this was my first year as an EL support teacher across multiple grade bands, I would never have been equipped in the way that the fellowship prepared me to meet so many different instructional needs this year.”

-Caroline Montgomery, DLC Fellow

Due to the Nashville tornado and COVID school closings, this unit was not able to be implemented. However, I was able to meet with second grade teachers several times before the start of the unit, which will hopefully open the doors for using this model of instruction next year. Because teachers are now acutely aware of the comprehension gap, my additional hope is that teachers see the need for this change in lesson implementation and are willing to continue to try this format next year. This will hopefully create a manageable system for teachers to use in their classrooms for Tier 2 and 3 whole group comprehension instruction.

Due to the DLC Fellowship, I had motivation to dig deeper into my teaching practice and think holistically about EL instruction at East End Prep. As this was my first year as an EL support teacher across multiple grade bands, I would never have been equipped in the way that the fellowship prepared me to meet so many different instructional needs this year. From the full group meetings, discussions, and resource sharing to observations and thought-partnering in the classroom from Mary, each element of the fellowship equipped me with strategies and ideas that I would not have had access to otherwise. EL students at EEP greatly benefited from the fellowship, and I'm so thankful for all that it provided to my practice – I'm sad for it to end!



Christine Yang

Director of Student Supports
Republic High School



Randall Ackerly

Special Education Teacher
Republic High School



Equipping General Education Teachers with Skills and Tools to Better Support Diverse Learners in Their Classes

As a school, we noticed that many of our teachers had room for growth when it came to providing high quality accommodations and scaffolds to students with diverse needs. We found this gap to be due to inexperience, lack of training, and subjects outside of Math and English often falling out of focus. Given this information, we wanted to ensure we equipped teachers of all subjects with the tools they need to implement accommodations without the help of a Special Education teacher.

In order to help teachers acquire the skills and resources necessary to teach diverse learners, we began a Professional Learning Community at our school and began hosting professional development opportunities. To be more specific, the Professional Learning Community focused on how we can bring resources and tactics to all teachers in order to be more innovative about how we serve diverse learners.

Our meetings consisted of reading an article related to serving students with special needs, discussing ways to use the article's suggestions to fit our specific students' needs, then bringing these resources to different content areas. Our professional development series was structured a bit differently in order to provide teachers the opportunity to incorporate what they learned immediately into an upcoming lesson. In our "Accommodation Implementation" professional development, we reviewed the five most common accommodations then worked in teams to determine best practices for how to use these accommodations for each content area. The collaborative nature of this professional development series gave teachers the space to not only learn from one another, but also form new ideas about how we can best serve our diverse learners.



After our professional development, we gave teachers the opportunity to give us feedback and reflect on if/how this training impacted their practices moving forward. Given a scale of one to five, 90% of teachers rated themselves a four or higher after the training meaning they “understand how to use accommodations and can clearly explain how I implement them.” When asked what was most helpful about the professional development, most teachers noted having the space to collaborate with other teachers to brainstorm how to effectively and efficiently implement accommodations was most beneficial.



Given that most teachers left feeling more equipped to work with diverse learners, we hope to continue the Professional Learning Community and professional development series next year hopefully starting earlier in the year so that we may see an even larger impact. Ideally, we will continue educating our fellow teachers on how to best serve students with unique needs consistently throughout the year in order to ensure accommodations are implemented with absolute fidelity across all contents. Additionally, as we continue to collaborate together, we hope to further build on our best practices and sharpen our systems to provide all students with the highest quality education that they deserve.

“Given that most teachers left feeling more equipped to work with diverse learners, we hope to continue the Professional Learning Community and professional development series next year hopefully starting earlier in the year so that we may see an even larger impact.”

-Christine Yang & Randall Ackerly, DLC Fellows

Randall Ackerly:

The Diverse Learners Cooperative has helped me to sharpen my teaching skills, think creatively about how to serve students with exceptional needs, and view myself as a leader within the classroom. Being a part of the fellowship gave me the opportunity to use my leadership skills to positively impact a need at our school using a data-driven and collaborative process. As a result, we were able to advocate for diverse learners by educating teachers on best practices, develop solutions to challenges across content areas, and create both effective and efficient strategies for accommodation implementation. We are excited to begin the next school year with the strategies and training from the fellowship in mind to continue advocating for our students and meeting their needs with the best possible practices.

Christine Yang:

I was empowered and pushed by the DLC Fellowship to reflect my practice as a school leader. The work of supporting diverse learners involves many stakeholders, and it isn't the sole responsibility of any person. I learned how to uplift and empower our Student Supports team to take actions - to advocate for our diverse learners' needs even when things were comfortable. Our Impact Project gave us the opportunity to ignite conversations on how we can collectively as a group do things better for our students and to hold each other accountable. I look forward to continuing this work for our teachers next year.



Claire Seguin

Director of Student Support Services

East End Prep



Improving Access to Core Content Classes for Scholars with Disabilities

A need that was identified by parents and teachers this year was that our scholars with disabilities (SWD) were struggling to meet the assignment expectations in core content classrooms, which was affecting the academic growth and the morale of both scholars and teachers. In assessing this need, I collected core content data (specifically scholars' grades) and met with several teachers across the first quarter to identify patterns in scholar access and areas needing improvement across grade levels, content areas, and teachers.

There were several trends I observed during this research. First, there was a disconnect between the grades our SWDs were receiving and their demonstrated abilities in daily classroom work. Additionally, when low grades were received, these were not always communicated transparently or immediately to families. Finally, while teachers were receptive to adapting and accommodating assignments to meet the needs of SWDs, multiple expressed a desire to see concrete examples of these accommodations in practice to feel confident enough to incorporate themselves. Overall, multiple diverse learners were failing several core classes, and so I developed a multi-step plan that would address this need to set up both scholars and teachers for success moving forward.

First, I produced a set of grading guidelines that teachers could use when evaluating the assignments submitted by our SWD. These guidelines incorporated ways for teachers to reflect accommodations that were given and evaluate scholars' work with a more critical lens. Guidelines also included a checklist for next steps if a scholar did fail an assignment, which included communication with families, methods for additional attempts, and options for remediation of the content. The goal was to collect data again across the second quarter to see if these guidelines had an effect on scholar performance; this data would also be shared parent conversations.

In doing so, I noticed that some progress had been made but that more was needed. Generally, our scholar supports team needed to raise awareness about scholars with disabilities and their needs in accessing core content. From there, I wanted to hone in on specific problem areas that we could target as a group with professional development, and then follow up with individual teachers who needed more specific support. Therefore, I created a plan for facilitating professional development sessions with grade level teachers that would help them improve their practice. Sessions would occur within grade bands at our school (K-2, 3-5, 6-8), and each teacher would receive a breakdown of their data of SWDs achievement along with a reflection about progress that could be made. In January, the teachers received professional development on how to incorporate differentiation through the use of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Then, I planned a follow up session for February in which teachers would participate in a case study workshop - using sample scholar data, teachers would analyze assignment grades to evaluate whether the differentiation that had been implemented since January had been effective in providing greater access to diverse learners in core classes. However, this training had been postponed and was unable to be completed before school closures in March.

While I was not able to analyze the effectiveness of these solutions this year, I plan to use this framework next school year. My hope is that this will lead to mindset shifts around changes we can make in our instruction to ensure that all scholars, especially scholars with disabilities, can meaningfully engage in grade level content.



Gillian Dunaway

Special Education Teacher

Waverly Belmont School



Supporting Student Behavior through Function-Based Intervention Planning & Staff Fidelity Training

For my impact project, I decided to focus on one diverse learner who was engaging in severe challenging behavior and needed trained staff to implement a behavior intervention plan with fidelity. My hope was that creating an intervention plan that met the functional needs of his behavior would not only make the student and his peers safer, but would also set him up to be successful in learning new academic and social skills as well.

My first step was to conduct some initial research and data collection. As part of the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) process, I reviewed the student's file and interviewed his teachers. I observed him in the classroom, and collected ABC data to help inform us about the function of his aggression and non-compliant behaviors. I also gathered data on the frequency with which the student asked for help and followed directions when he appeared unregulated; this established a baseline level of these behaviors before implementing an intervention that would hopefully increase these behaviors in the future. One trend I noticed from this research was that the student engaged in challenging behaviors most often when presented with a work task during math, reading, and center-based rotations. When aggression occurred, it occurred in succession to non-compliance approximately 95% of the time - this meant that our team needed to intervene to de-escalate challenging behavior at the non-compliance stage in order to see a decrease in aggression as well.

My central questions moving forward asked: How can the team decrease non-compliance and aggression behaviors exhibited by this child, and instead increase the frequency of compliance and safe body behaviors? Additionally, how can I train the adults working with this child to approach his behavior in the same way so that we can be as consistent as possible with implementing intervention?

I developed and implemented a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) as a solution to answer these questions. One component of the plan focused on providing emotional skills instruction using the Zones of Regulation curriculum. I worked with the student to first teach him how to identify when he is regulated vs. unregulated, then helped him learn how to identify strategies he could use when unregulated to get back to a regulated state. Our skill building also targeted asking for help, with teachers encouraging the student to seek help before becoming non-compliant with tasks. Finally, once the student was able to remain in a regulated state for longer durations, we planned to teach him how to comply with task directives more consistently, which required training the adults on his team to provide prompting and praise appropriately to help the student succeed.

We had approximately 7 weeks of implementation prior to school closures, with some improvements in the student's behavior. My hope is that the impact of this project - specifically, the individualized behavioral skills instruction - will continue into next school year and help this child achieve success in the general education classroom. I also hope that teachers feel more equipped to respond to behavior and provide the right levels of support when needed. The goal is that they will also bring these skills into their teaching practices in the fall.



Gretchen O'Henley

Exceptional Education Teacher

Shwab Elementary



Team Tallies: Addressing Tier I Behavior in a General Education Classroom

I recognized that many 4th grade students in the co-taught class were engaging in disruptive behavior in their general education classes. The behavior was coming from a variety of students (students with and without disabilities) and occurring frequently enough that it impacted learning for *all* students in the class, whether or not they were the ones engaging in inappropriate behaviors. The frequent disruptions made it especially difficult for students with attention, behavior, and learning challenges to follow along and remain engaged with lessons.

After collaborating with our 4th grade general education teachers, I learned that they had tried several classwide behavior and incentive plans, but nothing had been implemented consistently enough to affect behavior. I decided to implement a classwide behavior system in one of the classes in which I was co-teaching. I used components from an existing classroom management system, Class-Wide Function-related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT). The basic procedure was as follows:

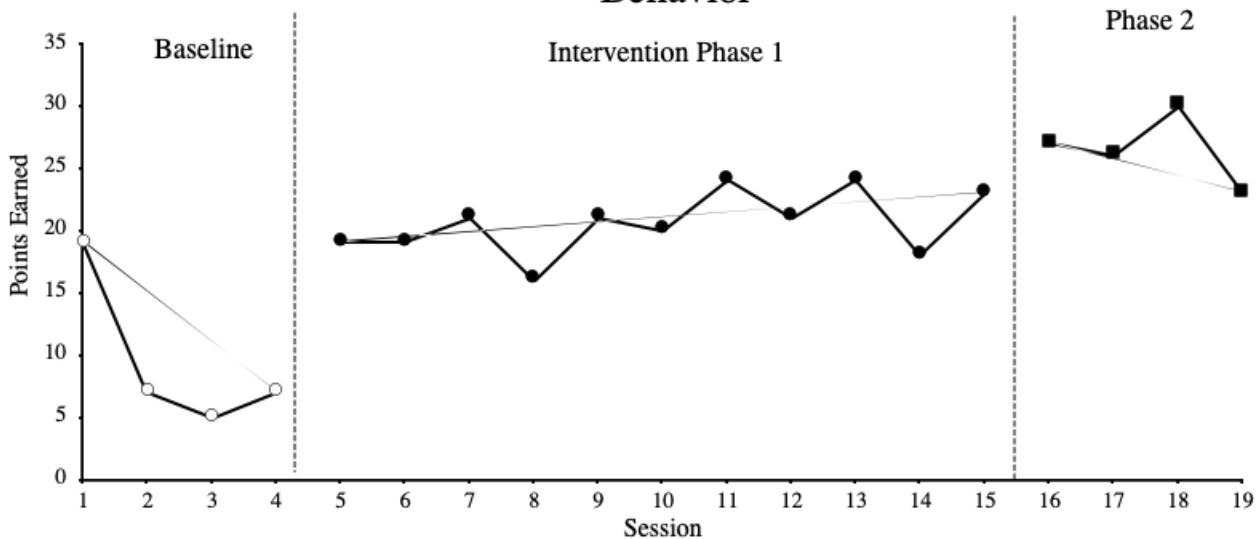
- Explicitly taught students three specific appropriate behaviors through 15-20 min. mini-lessons. I identified behaviors to address from teacher interviews and classroom observations.
- Divided students into teams.
- Teams had opportunities to earn points *frequently* (every 3-5 min.) for demonstrating appropriate behaviors. Each point was paired with specific praise (relating to taught behaviors).
- Teams that met a designated point goal by the end of a block earned a reward.

At the beginning of implementation, I modeled giving points and praise to teams. I gradually shared this responsibility with the general education teacher once she felt comfortable with the system.



There were still changes we had hoped to make after running the system for several weeks, but overall students in the class showed an increase in the explicitly taught behaviors (see graphs below), including those on my EE caseload with challenging behaviors. Anecdotally, more students were following along with the lessons and learning! It also gave both myself and the general education teacher scheduled reminders to provide praise to students and teams, which overall increased the number of praise statements made during class. The general education teacher said, "I liked that it made me praise more and I feel that it helped with the relationships in the room." Students reported that they liked the system, especially when their teams were doing well and earning points. They also liked that they got their treat right after the academic block ended.

Total Team Tallies (Teams 1-3) Earned Daily for Positive Behavior



The students will be moving on to middle school, but hopefully they will have a better understanding of several appropriate ways to gain attention in school. I will be working with the same group of general education teachers again next year. The teacher with whom I worked especially liked the use of the resetting timer to remind her to praise more often, so I hope that she will continue using it into next year. I also hope to be able to help her and the other 4th grade teachers set up a similar system that they can follow through with independently at the start of next year.

"The DLC Fellowship encouraged me to collaborate and consult with general education teachers at my new school to improve learning for my students."

-Gretchen O'Henley, DLC Fellow

The DLC Fellowship encouraged me to collaborate and consult with general education teachers at my new school to improve learning for my students. It also provided me with amazing coaching, feedback, and resources that helped me better reach my students this year, but I know will also have a lasting effect on my professional practice as a teacher moving forward as well. Finally, the DLC connected me with a fantastic group of educators who I felt lucky to be able to learn from and collaborate with this year!



Ilene Giamanco

8th Grade ELA/ELD

McMurray Middle School

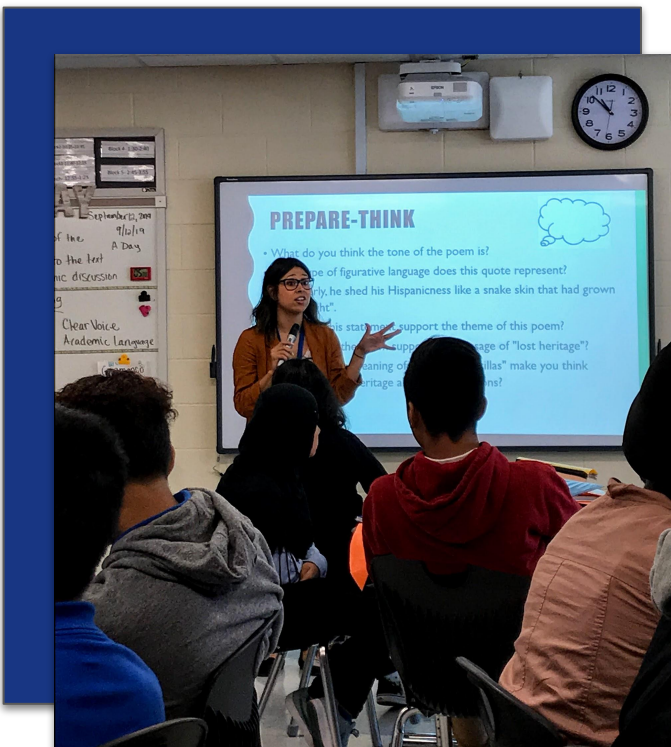


Motivating Long-Term English Learners (LTELS) To Meet their Individual Learning Plan Goals

The focus of this project was to assess how a group of 14 LTELS perceived their inner selves in relation to long-term goals. All 14 of these students came from Hispanic families and were within a few points of exiting the EL program, based on the current exit criteria. LTELS often show tendencies of low motivation, which could be an indicator of poor self-esteem. The goal was to connect with community partners and families to encourage students to make both language and personal goals. By collecting data from a college survey, ILPs, student journals, and WIDA ACCESS scores, students participated in the following:

- Curriculum focused on character development
- Small group session with high school seniors who were former EL students
- Attended workshops conducted in Spanish to help them set personal goals after high school

In addition to these events, a night to connect with the families was in the process of being planned. The evening (potentially a reoccurring event) would have included community partners who focus on supporting Hispanic families, representatives from local universities, explanation of WIDA ACCESS test and other state assessments, and opportunities for parents to share their hopes for their child.



"The goal was to connect with community partners and families to encourage students to make both language and personal goals."

-Ilene Giamanco, DLC Fellow



Jennifer Jasmin

1st Grade EL Teacher

Mount View Elementary School



Shiloh Burns

English Learners Teacher

Mount View Elementary School



Increasing EL Language Growth Through Building Teacher Capacity

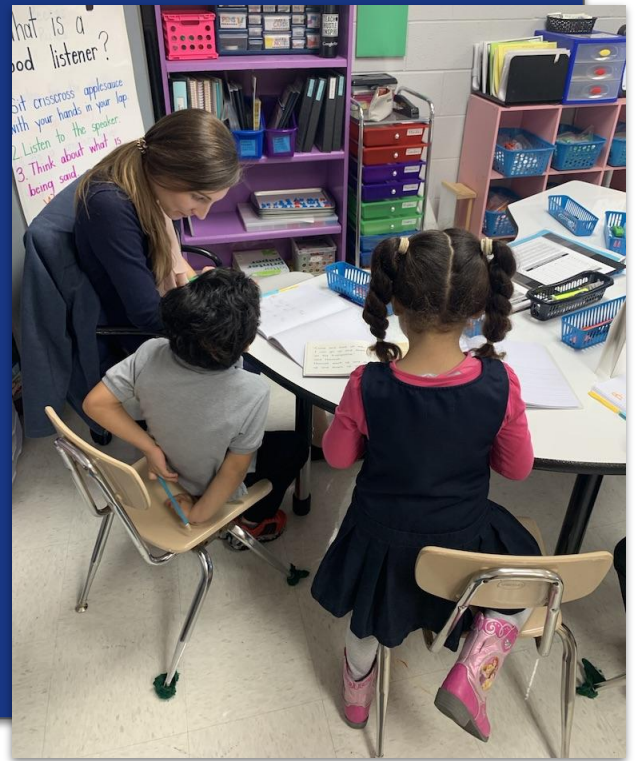
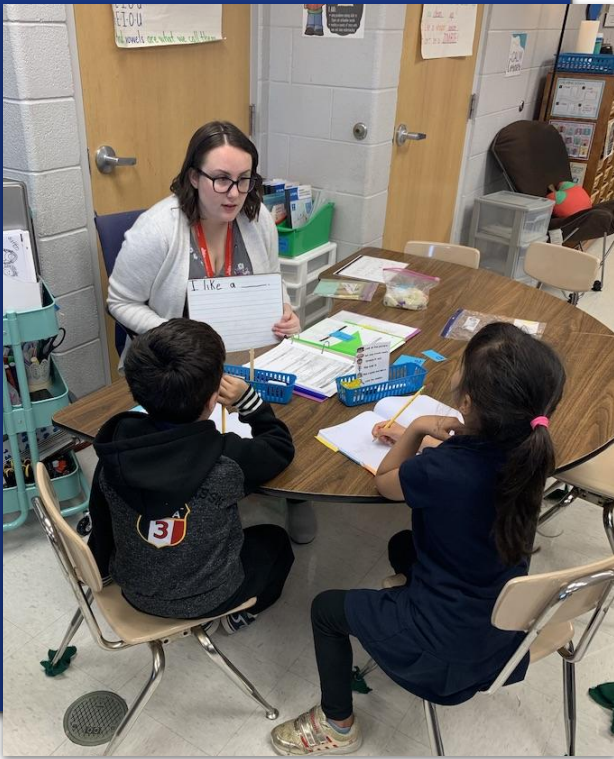
When analyzing our ACCESS data from the 2018-2019 school year, we noticed that 1st grade EL students who were placed in homerooms with a non-EL certified teacher did not meet their language growth goal. This prompted us to expand our analysis and look at our school-wide ACCESS data. We saw the same trend in three out of four grade levels. Our ultimate goal is to increase the percentage of EL students at Mt. View who meet their language growth goal on the ACCESS assessment. We are doing this by building teacher capacity through teacher-led professional development and an EL PLC.

Our ultimate goal is to increase the percentage of EL students at Mt. View who meet their language growth goal on the ACCESS assessment. We are doing this by building teacher capacity through teacher-led professional development and an EL PLC. Our EL PLC meets monthly. We are working through a book study using the book [Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain](#) by Zaretta Hammond. Our PLC also plans professional development for our school surrounding EL students. We deliver a five minute EL strategy at every faculty meeting in addition to longer professional development sessions offered throughout the school year.

Through the use of a survey, we found that the percentage of teachers at Mt. View who rated themselves as “not at all confident” or “slightly confident” in their ability to engage EL students in their classrooms decreased from 37.5% to 6.25% from July 2019 to December 2019. Additionally, the percentage of teachers who rated themselves at “confident” or “very confident” increased from 46.88% to 62.5% from July 2019 to December 2019. We intended to administer this survey again in April, but have not due to school building closures. Additionally, our intention was to compare the percentage of students who met their language growth goal on ACCESS in the 2018-2019 school year with the 2019-2020 school year. However, not all EL students at Mt. View finished ACCESS prior to school building closures. Moving forward, we will use ACCESS data to measure the impact of our solution.

“We found that the percentage of teachers at Mt. View who rated themselves as ‘not at all confident’ or ‘slightly confident’ in their ability to engage EL students in their classrooms decreased from 37.5% to 6.25% from July 2019 to December 2019.”

-Jennifer Jasmin & Shiloh Burns, DLC Fellows



We intend to continue our EL PLC in the next school year. We will continue to assess teacher capacity in regards to teaching EL students in our school building and provide professional development to increase that capacity.

The DLC Fellowship has provided meaningful professional development and time to focus on a practical solution to a need in our school building. It has specifically increased our capacity in the domain of teacher leadership and has encouraged both of us to take on that role in our school.

The DLC has fostered an environment of like-minded educators who can problem solve together. This environment has been incredibly helpful and nourishing.

"It has specifically increased our capacity in the domain of teacher leadership and has encouraged both of us to take on that role in our school."

*-Jennifer Jasmin & Shiloh Burns,
DLC Fellows*



Jordyn DeFalco

Special Education Teacher

Liberty Collegiate Academy

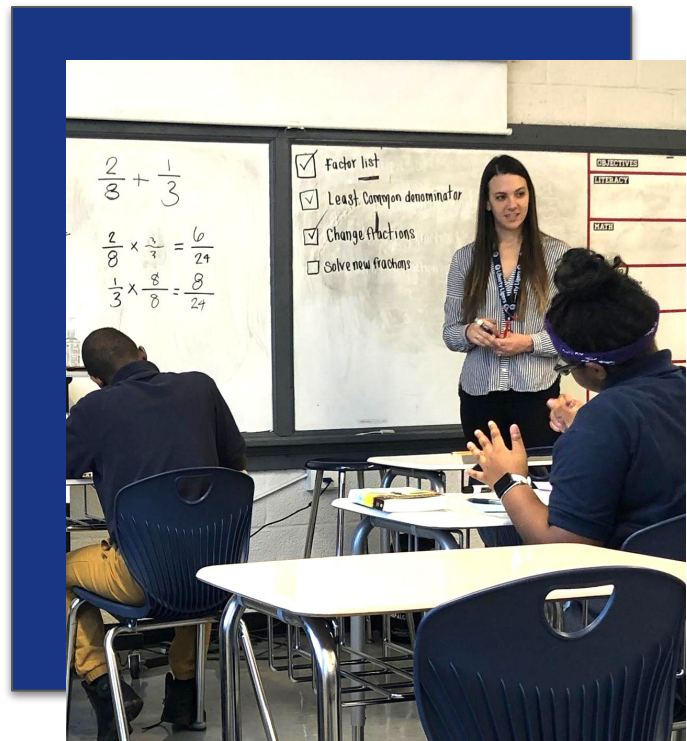


Prioritizing Scholars with Disabilities to Improve Academic Growth

In my role as a special education teacher, my job is to support multiple grade levels of scholars with IEPs so that they can make significant growth on their goals and close the gap compared to their peers. Our diverse learners are served through both pull-out and push-in models, particularly in their math and reading classes.

However, I noticed a trend in the data of our diverse learners that concerned me. When looking at our 8th grade data, I observed that 100% of our scholars with IEPs were failing at least two classes, and these classes were not ones that were related to their identified disability. Furthermore, 77% of these same scholars were failing three or more classes, which often included a core content class like reading or math that was related to their disability. These trends made me question whether scholars' accommodations in their IEPs were effective or setting them up for success in their general education classroom. It appeared that these scholars needed additional support, which prompted me to consider a case study solution that I could implement with two 8th grade scholars with disabilities.

I chose these scholars because they demonstrated growth on MAP from August to December and would be a good comparison to other 8th grade scholars with IEPs in terms of service times. I wanted to see whether scholars' growth would continue at the same rate or grow at a faster rate if they were given additional support in non-core classes like history and science (where scholars typically do not receive inclusion support from a special education teacher). At LCA, teachers designate 3-5 scholars per class as "priority" scholars - these are students on the cusp of demonstrating proficiency in a subject and would benefit from additional teacher support.



My solution to the identified need above was to collaborate with general education teachers in history and science classes to make these two scholars with IEPs "priority scholars" to determine whether this extra support led to increased growth on MAP and F&P reading levels with a simultaneous decrease in failing grades.

I planned to collect additional data before implementing. First, I would observe both scholars for 15-30 minutes in their science and history classes to determine the number of times they were called on to answer, talked with the teacher, had their work checked by the teacher, and given feedback on their exit tickets. Next, I would also get baseline reading levels using Fountas & Pinnell text level assessments. Then, I would create a “cheat sheet” of important information to know about each scholar for the general education teachers so they would have insights into the scholars’ preferences, interests, and needs like I did (since I wouldn’t be able to provide additional service time during these blocks). Finally, I would have a conversation with each student about why they had been chosen a “priority” scholar and what actions they could take to improve their learning through interactions with the teacher during class.

Classroom Information			
Teacher Name		Student Name	
Date + Time		Student Name	(if observing more than 1)
Content Area		Lesson Topic	
Observation Focus			

[Priority Students] These students will be prioritized by the classroom teacher to support students’ growth over time. Target behaviors of teachers interacting with priority students can include: intentional grouping with partners or peers, supporting them in finding an answer during turn and talks, calling on them following turn and talks, circulating and assisting with work during independent times, and/or providing feedback on exit tickets.

Observation Information			Notes
Times	Target Behavior	Frequency (Tally Marks)	
10:25	<u>Check Ins during Turn + Talk</u>		

While I was able to collect the initial data, I unfortunately could not implement my project due to the school closures. Since these students will be moving on to high school in the fall, my hope is that I can replicate the same project with incoming 8th grade scholars on my caseload. I would like to be able to implement this practice earlier in the school year too, so that scholars can develop skills that will help them be more successful independently. I think that this project will also help general education teachers recognize and implement practices that will benefit diverse learners in addition to other priority scholars.



Juliana Musselman

Director of Student Supports

Nashville Academy of Computer Science



Impact of Phonics Intervention on Reading Growth of Tier III Readers

Our school has consistently worked to make our daily intervention block effective but has struggled with getting the results we wanted to see. We have focused primarily on implementing Guided Reading and coaching teachers around how to run effective Guided Reading groups. We have not focused as much on our Tier III readers, and as a result we have seen them continue to show little to no growth on benchmark assessments and continue to struggle to access general education curriculum.

To help address this need, I started by analyzing data and collaborating with teammates to identify the best students for an intensive phonics intervention program. I then split the students into 2 separate groups to allow for students to receive as much 1:1 attention as possible. The lower of the 2 groups completed Orton Gillingham lessons with one of my special education teachers and the other group completed Wilson Reading lessons with my other special education teacher. To measure progress, each week students were assessed with a word reading fluency (Orton Gillingham) or passage reading fluency (Wilson) probe. This data allowed us to see the short-term impact of the intervention. Ideally, at the end of the year we would have been able to see the long-term effects of the intervention by comparing student benchmark and reading screener data form before and after implementation.

Even after only 4 weeks of implementation, 100% of students showed an increase in their reading rate! Some students showed more rapid growth than others, which was exciting – these students grew so much that had we still been in school they would have been on track to move out of Tier III group. Additionally, I was able to allocate my time to strictly coaching these two groups rather than coaching these groups plus guided reading groups. This allowed me to spend more times in these teachers' classrooms and give more frequent feedback, which led to teachers improving their practice quicker. While I will not be in the same building next year, I will make sure to begin implementing structured Tier III intervention right from the start of the year. If students have the opportunity to start in this intensive program earlier, it is likely that we will see even more drastic long-term results for these students, as well as more opportunities for students to move between different tiers of intervention as appropriate.

I have appreciated all of the support from different members of the DLC Fellowship. It was great to have like-minded professionals to bounce ideas off of. Additionally, through this fellowship I was exposed to a variety of different tools and resources that I have been able to apply to my practice.

“Even after only 4 weeks of implementation, 100% of students showed an increase in their reading rate! ...These students grew so much that had we still been in school they would have been on track to move out of Tier III group.”

-Juliana Musselman, DLC Fellow



Kelsey Smith

Special Education Teacher

Crieve Hall Elementary



Creating Meaningful Inclusion Opportunities

I wanted to create more meaningful inclusive experiences for my students with significant and complex needs at school. These students struggle to interact with their peers when they are together, so while inclusion was a part of our school culture we weren't making the most of the opportunities.

I sought to solve this problem from 3 different angles. I planned to provide training to our paraprofessionals on best practices when working with students with disabilities, and particularly students who use AAC devices to communicate. I added additional AAC device instruction into the daily classroom schedule and switched to teaching Core Words to give my students a better chance at communicating with their peers. Finally I designed a "core word" board for the playground at school and planned to have it installed. I planned to unveil the new board and educate general education peers about how to use it (through the use of focused read-alouds) in April.

This project still exists primarily in a planning phase due to school closures. I am hopeful it can be continued next year and the addition of the playground board + disability education will help all students form stronger relationships with one another.

This was my favorite year of teaching by far and I owe so much of that to the DLC. It was energizing and encouraging to tackle such a "big" issue common in schools and to consistently be thinking of ways to solve it. The DLC helped me come up with so many creative solutions and really helped me feel confident in the impact I, as a single educator, can have on an entire school's culture and practices.

"This was my favorite year of teaching by far and I owe so much of that to the DLC...The DLC helped me come up with so many creative solutions and really helped me feel confident in the impact I, as a single educator, can have on an entire school's culture and practices." -Kelsey Smith, DLC Fellow





Lindsey Barnes

Exceptional Education Lead 1st - 2nd grade

East End Prep



Effective Reading Comprehension Strategies to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners

When looking at the progress my students were making this year I was blown away by their growth. However, every year I came up against the same question, "Why aren't my students who struggle with reading comprehension showing as much growth as they are in other areas?"

I was suggested a curriculum by one of our DLC Fellows called "Visualizing and Verbalizing." I grouped my students by need based on their STEP data and classroom observation. We started from the beginning of the curriculum and it allowed everyone (including me) to get familiar with the structure and routines. By the third week of instruction I saw that my students were using the strategies that had been taught in the previous two weeks!

The curriculum allowed my students to engage with texts in a fun and different way. It focused heavily on vocabulary development and diving deeply into a text in a way that was accessible to diverse learners.

I hope to utilize this curriculum from the beginning of the school year. My hope is that the strategies learned in small groups can be used to help them access their grade level content.

The DLC Fellowship did so many things for my professional practice this year! First and foremost the community of like-minded educators was huge. It was so inspiring to learn from others and have access to support from DLC mentors and other fellows. The Fellowship also allowed me to think about my teaching in a different way. It pushed me to ask the questions, "What am I doing well?" and "How can I make this better?" The best part was when it was time to make things better, there was support along the way! I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the DLC Fellowship.

"The Fellowship also allowed me to think about my teaching in a different way. It pushed me to ask the questions, 'What am I doing well?' and 'How can I make this better?'"

-Lindsey Barnes, DLC Fellow



Mary Alice Stovall

Secondary EL Teacher 11th & 12th grade

McGavock High School



Efficacy in Mathematics for English Learners

This project aims to bridge skill gaps for EL students who may have come from countries with insufficient math education. It also aims to build student confidence in math abilities that will hopefully transfer to their content math class and increase achievement. I came up with this project after collecting data at my school. I decided to investigate EL class failures and I came to several conclusions.

First, I found that EL students failing in mathematics are lacking similar key skills taught in lower grades. The data also revealed that EL students fail math more than any other class at McGavock High School. Because of this, there are many EL students that have had to go to summer school every year to repeat their math classes.

The solution that I came up with was to create a sheltered setting to identify and address skill gaps with instruction from a math content teacher. An EL teacher would supervise, help design and implement lessons. We did this using our school's personalized learning time (PLT), when RTI skills are addressed. We created two math PLT classes for ELs who were targeted for Tier 2 math intervention. Students took a preliminary efficacy and skill gap test, then teachers built curriculum from there. In class, students seemed to tackle assignments with more vigor and appeared more confident in their abilities to persevere! While school closure prevented data collection to confirm this, anecdotally I reflected upon the challenges and discoveries made along the way.

My primary challenge included discerning whether individual students truly had math difficulties or were struggling in math because of language gaps. Moreover, it is difficult to find time as an EL teacher to be hands on as often as we'd like, with both students and other teachers. I would love to always be able to offer more support with planning and implementation, but time constraints in my daily schedule make this difficult. On the other hand, I learned to never doubt student capability once students feel self efficacy! I also discovered that while breaking fixed mindsets can be difficult, it is not impossible.

I have several ideas for next year that I am looking forward to implementing. I plan to have 3 math intervention groups during personalized learning time (PLT) to better provide support and skill building that is specific to each class' content needs. I also would like to find a better way to work with Fastbridge data, to analyze whether this model is supporting students' math growth. Finally, I want to build in self-advocacy skills training for students that will help them build a growth mindset about their math skills and overall capabilities. Our school has agreed to implement these math PLTs again with further improvements after seeing the anecdotal evidence from the classes!

"Students seemed to tackle assignments with more vigor and also seemed more confident in their abilities to persevere!"

-Mary Alice Stovall, DLC Fellow



Marycruz Baylon

Spanish Teacher / Upper School EL Coordinator

Strive Collegiate Academy



Tracking MAP Data Growth for English Learner (EL) Students at STRIVE Collegiate Academy

At STRIVE, our team frequently analyzes student data across multiple assessments to ensure that we are on track to close the achievement gap for diverse learners. One trend we noticed was that there was an academic achievement gap between our general population and that of our EL students for all grade levels. For example, TN Ready and MAP data both showed that our subgroup students (EL and SWD) were not reaching grade level goals. Additionally, while ACCESS scores on ELlevation showed some students performing at the developing and expanding levels of language proficiency, the speaking domain was the lowest achieving domain for students across the board. Because of these scores, we wanted to make some changes that would prepare ALL students, but especially our 8th grade students, for access to high-quality high schools. As we considered some central questions about how to improve our students' scores, I decided that I wanted to find a way to track how our time was being spent in instruction and see whether adapting our classroom instructional models could positively impact our students' learning and their growth data.

I looked at our school schedule, and helped the team group EL students into a sheltered classroom for some of their instruction. The time spent in this classroom had an emphasis on filling academic gaps from the general education grouping. Additionally, a focus was to use this time to increase students' reading lexile levels to give them greater access to success. In order to determine whether this solution was effective, I created a data tracker that was used intentionally and consistently by team members who worked with these students. It was primarily used to analyze individual student's reading levels as well as class progress toward language and academic growth goals. This tracker was accessible by all of the teachers, which made sharing data much easier and more efficient.

Using a tailored data tracker increased the quantity and quality of the data we collected around student growth. I was able to go deeper into the data to analyze how time spent and specific strategies we used could both be associated with our students' growth. Our school team plans to continue to collect data using this tracker next school year, so I am planning to share the ways to use the tracker and the results we saw in the data during a professional development session for teachers in the fall.

Through this experience, I learned that partnership is everything. I have such a better understanding of our school needs through the data I collected and can now create aligned action steps.





Ryan Selvaggio

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)

/ EL Teacher

Hunters Lane High School



Seeking Connectedness and Alignment in a High School EL/SIFE Classroom: An Approach to Creating Deeper Connections for Students and Teachers

This school year, I began the school year by reflecting on the needs of my current and previous students by giving them a “First Weeks of School” and “School Engagement” survey in order to see what their experiences were the first weeks of school, what information they did not have when coming into the school that they wish they had, and also ways that they want to be engaged with the school but currently are not for varying reasons. After collecting and reviewing the data from these two surveys from my current and previous students, I noticed a theme of connectedness and alignment that the students desired but did not currently have. I realized that students had needs regarding:

- *The physical layout of the school* (i.e. where certain classes are, where bathrooms are, etc.)
- *Understanding a high school block schedule* (A/B days, length of classes, etc.)
- *Various school procedures* (lunch lines and lunch numbers, transportation after school, etc.)
- *Credits and graduation* (length of time needed to graduate, what classes are needed, etc.)
- *Cultural and academic expectations in the school building* (behavior, group work, etc.)
- *Clubs and activities in the school* (What they are, how to sign up, what is needed for involvement like physicals and fees and teacher connections)








Keeping the theme of connectedness and alignment in mind, I also created and administered a “SIFE Connectedness and Alignment” survey to my SIFE team of three in order to see the needs and desires of our team as well. After collecting and reviewing the data from this survey, I noticed that all three of us had needs regarding:

- A desire to collaborate and connect more regularly (meet more consistently)
- Communicate more regularly during the school day (via phone or text about support needed)
- Time spent in one another’s classroom (to learn from one another and to be visible to students in different classroom spaces)



On the student end, I thought about my zone of influence as an educator and decided to create some materials and lessons that I was planning on presenting in Q4 of this year, but because of our extended time of school being out they will be initiated next year. I created a New Student Packet that includes items such as maps of the school, explanations and images of the Transportation system at my school, and some basic academic resources that can be used in multiple classes (i.e. the alphabet, Wh- questions and L1 translation of them, etc.). These will be given to students when they first come to school, and future student ambassadors or I as the teacher will explain the resources to my students.

Name: _____

Question Word	In Spanish	Description	Picture
Who?	¿Quién?	Person	
Action Verb?	¿Verbo de acción?	Action	
Where?	¿Dónde?	Place	
What?	¿Qué? / ¿Cuál?	Thing/idea	
Linking Verb?	verbo igual	=	
When?	¿Cuándo?	Time	
What kind of?	¿Que tipo de?	characteristic	

Next, I have gathered a list of all clubs, sports, and activities at the school and a brief description and image for each and the appropriate teacher contact. These have been and will continue to be posted throughout my classroom and referenced during various sign-up seasons. I also created a set of Social Emotional lessons (i.e. study skills, behavior, etc.) as well as a set of lessons that talk students through the high school credit system and help them plan for graduation from very early on to provide a goal for them to work towards.

Lastly, and largest of all, I have begun meeting with the assistant principal of the Freshman Academy to create greater connections with our SIFE Program to ensure that our students are involved in field trips, Academy meetings, and Freshman Seminar materials that I am taking and adding scaffolds and supports so that my students can comprehend.

On the teacher end, from very early on in the school year we jointly agreed to meet weekly or biweekly to collaborate more, decided upon a communication plan throughout the day (via school phone, cell phone, or knocking on teachers' doors) to allow our team to support one another amongst the classes, and also started a cycle of "uncoaching" that allowed each of us the opportunity to observe one another teach to see what we could learn from one another (not provide feedback) to allow the visible connection between teachers for students to see as well.

For my students, the current (and hopefully future) impacts of these projects already led to direct connectedness and alignment for my students to the school culture. In the short amount of time that I was able to bring these resources to students, I saw more students getting involved with clubs, after school activities, and sports than in the prior four years of SIFE being at the school. Furthermore, new students have appreciated having some materials to make them feel comfortable from the first day of school which has visibly led to more engagement between that student and other students, the student and the school, and the student and the teacher relationship.

On the teacher end, our increased, intentional communication strategies led to a direct increase in connectedness and alignment through a higher feeling of connectedness and alignment on a post-survey and an increase of meaningful and supportive communication throughout the day. Furthermore, we tried "uncoaching" in one another's classrooms a couple of times that led to more alignment with teaching strategies, anchor charts and other visible supports, and opportunities to engage with students about behavioral and academic expectations. Our team of three was closer than in past years and knew we could rely upon one another.

Going into next year, I am looking forward to seeing the continued impact not only of the materials I have already created but also other prepared projects such as the Graduation and Credits unit, alignment with and use of Freshman Academy materials, and continued use of Social Emotional Learning lessons intertwined in our content for class. Furthermore, I am already planning a formal “Classroom Ambassador” Program for my current students and prior students to support new SIFE and ELs in the school. I hope that these intentional projects will lead to a direct increase in connectedness and alignment and help new students lower their barriers and feel more welcome in their new school environments.

In terms of my SIFE team, I am looking forward to continuing to meet consistently, communicate intentionally and often during school hours to support one another, and also formalize the “uncoaching” system within our SIFE team. Next year, I hope the “uncoaching” system will become a more regular structure that our team agrees on, and I plan on expanding it to other EL teachers in the school that want to join in as well. Furthermore, we will be starting the year with Core Values and Goals for the year to align with one another from the very beginning and also a “How-to” Guide for the various processes and procedures at Hunters Lane to encapsulate our time at our school and support new SIFE and EL teachers in the future. The goal of all these projects is to make each SIFE (and EL) teacher feel connected to and supported by peers around them and not allow our team to be siloed from the school or one another.

The DLC Fellowship provided me an opportunity to be amongst like minded teachers and administrators from across the district and created a cohort that I was able and will continue to utilize to flush out ideas to benefit our diverse learners. From our various trainings in the summer and throughout the year, I realized more and more how I can perform a needs analysis, how I can take that feedback to brainstorm possible solutions and interventions, and how to reflect on my own zone of influence within my school environment to ascertain which solutions will be the most effective and possible. I also learned not only about how to assess needs in my students but also how to assess the needs in my peers and colleagues as well, which ended up being a large part of my Impact Plan this year. Overall, the DLC Fellowship empowered me to realize that I can be a change agent in my classroom by asking for and reflecting upon the voices of my students and lifting their voices by making meaningful projects that can meet their academic and social needs at the school. I am excited to continue working with the DLC staff, my fellow DLC Fellow Alumni, and future DLC Fellows as we work to empower, embolden, and advocate for diverse learners in our city.

“Overall, the DLC Fellowship empowered me to realize that I can be a change agent in my classroom by asking for and reflecting upon the voices of my students and lifting their voices by making meaningful projects that can meet their academic and social needs at the school.”

-Ryan Selvaggio, DLC Fellow



Terri Johnson

Special Education Teacher

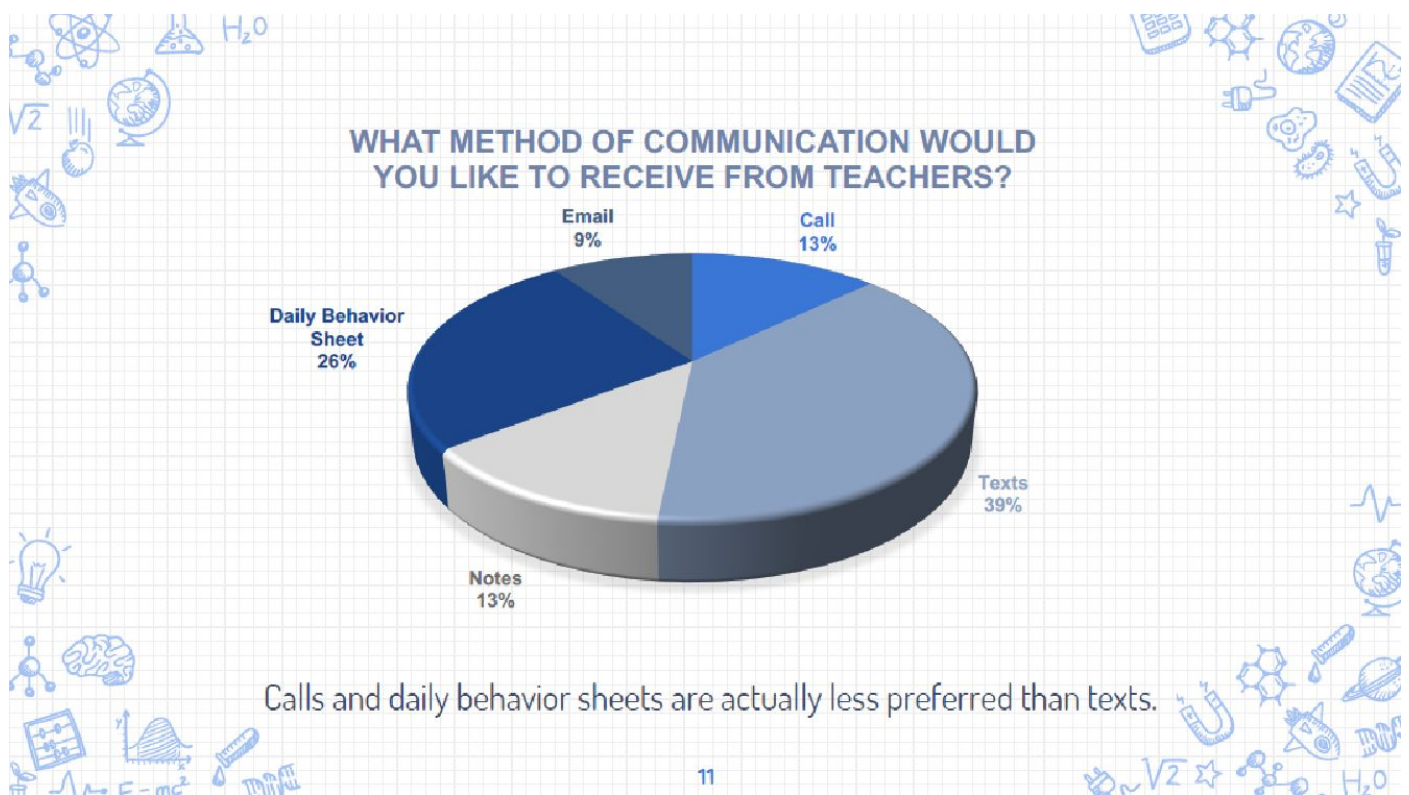
Alex Green Elementary School



Increasing Parent Involvement through Communication at Alex Green Elementary

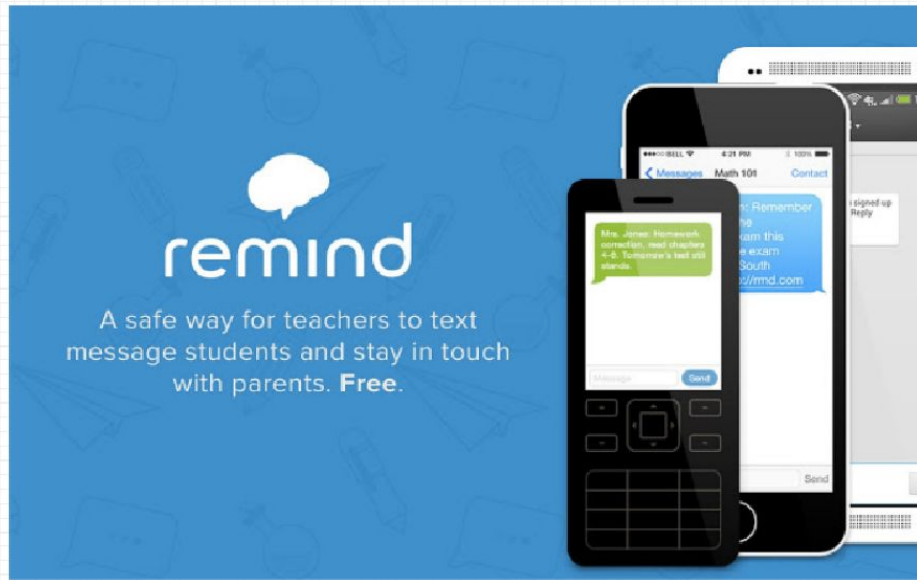
Our need was to increase communication with parents and to increase involvement in the school to create an environment of success for all students. According to research, students are more likely to achieve academically and have fewer behavioral problems when parents are involved in their education experience. Diverse learners tend to lag behind when information from school is not being communicated with their parents. Therefore, I feel that having good communication with parents and figuring out ways to involve them with their children's learning experience will make a difference in the outcomes of the students' education.

I administered a parent survey to find out what barriers were keeping the communication from being effective, and what support from the school was needed to increase communication with parents. After surveying 34 families, we found that approximately half of the families said they receive weekly communication from the school, and 73% feel that their voice is heard by our school staff. However, many parents commented that they didn't have enough notice for events. So, we needed to find a system of communicating with enough response time for the parents. While 39% of parents said that texting was their highest preferred method, over 80% of parents surveyed circled "text" as one of the preferred methods of communication from school. Therefore, we began researching possible texting platforms that would be effective in engaging most parents.



One possible solution we considered was to try using the text-based communication system, “Remind.”

- This system allows teachers to create a class account and add parents’ phone numbers.
- Parents receive a text and download the app to receive communication from the teachers.
- The teacher can send text reminders anytime they want parents to be aware of and involved in upcoming class activities, and the reminders can be sent as a group or individually.



One possible solution is to try using a text-based communication system.

I had the opportunity to present the parent survey data plus the Remind idea to my school at a staff meeting. Some of the teachers had used it and others were interested in finding out more information. There was a follow up meeting with Mary and our school parent involvement specialist, and she helped us to move forward with implementing a pilot program for 2020.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to receive so much rich information from my experience with the Fellowship. Mary has been a real joy to work with and I truly thank her for all her involvement in helping make this project a success. I have learned to follow through on what matters concerning things that benefit students, teachers, and the school. We can make a difference in the lives of the people we serve when there is a shared responsibility to accomplish a common goal.

“We can make a difference in the lives of the people we serve when there is a shared responsibility to accomplish a common goal.”
-Terri Johnson, DLC Fellow



Traci Williams

Director of Student Supports

Nashville Prep



Zoned for Success

Through my initial research and assessment, our leadership team identified that we needed to discover and implement new and different strategies for supporting our scholars with the most challenging behavior issues. We found that there was no time in the day to directly provide the level and depth of instruction that some of our scholars needed in order to transform some of the behaviors that were disrupting the learning environment into more preferred, appropriate behaviors for the school setting. The impact of this need manifested itself as high numbers of referrals, ISS and OSS days and lost time in instruction which resulted in poor grades and low assessment scores.

We decided to use the Zones of Regulation Curriculum with two of our scholars who were having significant behavioral issues, multiple times a day. One scholar had already gone through the FBA process resulting in a BIP. We were in the process of implementing phase 2 of his BIP through the use of a point and data tracking sheet. The other scholar's parent had just given consent for us to begin the FBA process with her daughter. The plan was for Scholar 1 to begin attending behavioral support studies during our intervention block where we would begin instruction using the Zones of Regulation Curriculum and track referral, ISS, OSS and grades to document the impact, if any.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 hit before we could move to the implementation phase of the project. Nonetheless, there was an impact on the team. For the first time since the school year began, we felt confident that we had a plan that gave us a clear direction for moving forward with, not only, how to manage the behaviors at issue, but how to help set our scholars up for success for the second semester and onward.

"Participating in the DLC Fellowship this year has made me a more confident leader. I also have a network of people with similar backgrounds and experiences whom I can reach out to for encouragement and support."

-Traci Williams, DLC Fellow

Although I'll be moving on from Nashville Prep, many of the team members who contributed to developing the plan are returning, the plan is in place, the materials are there, and the students will be back. My hope is that they will begin to implement the plan with the two scholars from day one and use it for the early identification and implementation of support for others.

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Acknowledgements & A Look Ahead

We would like to thank the DLC Fellows for their commitment to continuous learning and their fierce advocacy for diverse learners. We were continuously inspired by their work and the spirit of collaboration they brought to each session. Thank you also to the school leaders who endorsed their Fellows' participation in the inaugural class of the Fellowship. Their support meant greater outcomes for students often left behind.

We are also very grateful for the generous contributions of the Charter School Growth Fund and the Joe C. Davis Foundation. Their financial support made our work possible.

The Fellowship demonstrated that engaging teacher leaders in learning and practice specific to diverse learners' needs and building new professional networks leads to increased teacher belonging and efficacy, and further, teacher retention and student growth. While the year was incredibly successful, we know this work is just the beginning. Diverse learners in our city will continue to need access to great teachers, and we believe the DLC will continue to play a role in ensuring this is so.

If you are interested in learning more about the work of the Diverse Learners Cooperative, please visit our [website](#) or [get in touch with us directly](#). We look forward to partnering with your team in supporting all learners to reach their fullest potential.



“The DLC Fellowship has provided meaningful professional development and time to focus on a practical solution to a need in our school building. It has specifically increased our capacity in the domain of teacher leadership and has encouraged both of us to take on that role in our school.”

-Jennifer Jasmin & Shiloh Burns, DLC Fellows