

Empowering Missouri's Largest District to Meet Teachers and Students Where They Are

Springfield Public Schools, Missouri

CHALLENGE

Equip teachers at all levels with the right resources, coaching support, modeling strategies, and relevant professional development (PD) to confidently transform their mathematical practice and build capacity.

Springfield Public Schools is in the midst of implementing a three-year, district-wide, IGNITE initiative. The goal of IGNITE (which stands for Inspire, Grow, Network, Integrate, Transform, and Engage) is to provide the resources and support necessary for all teachers and students to access and experience an engaging, relevant, and personalized learning environment.

SOLUTION

Give teachers a safe environment to learn independently and explore new blended learning strategies at their own pace. Offer access to on-demand, data-driven professional development (PD) that fits their schedule and complements their learning style.

Springfield Public Schools District is particularly focused on guided math frameworks, and DreamBox is a large component of that. "Our expectation is that all elementary school teachers are using workshop models to differentiate for each student," says Catherine Castillo, numeracy coordinator.

"We're offering after-school PD, webinars, and face-to-face training sessions to help support teachers in implementing that goal."

The district is in year three of its rollout of IGNITE. Many teachers have already embraced a more personalized learning environment. The early successes of teachers embracing this change helped showcase to other teachers the value of personalized learning. "Being able to roll this out over several years has been really beneficial," says Castillo. "We've seen a major change in mindset and a real increase in teachers taking risks, and enjoying it."

“We combine DreamBox with great instruction and differentiation in the classroom. We can see growth in every single student because DreamBox is providing them the opportunity to fill in some of those holes so they can access grade-level content sooner.”

— Catherine Castillo
Math Coordinator
Springfield Public Schools



Castillo believes that teachers have been able to embrace new technology and teaching practices because the change has been gradual, and everyone has had access to DreamBox and other tech tools. As she says, "The schools that weren't 1:1 yet used DreamBox in their computer labs, which enabled them to ease into this new tool for teaching and learning."

New teachers participate in a DreamBox PD session to get familiar with the basics. They're also encouraged to take advantage of webinars and DreamBox's data-driven, embedded MyFlexPD™ modules to deepen their content knowledge in mathematics in ways that are relevant to their students' specific learning goals and challenges. Some schools have learning coaches or numeracy coaches who hold weekly or biweekly meetings with teachers. Castillo also served as a hands-on coach, meeting with teams of teachers to assist them in their DreamBox implementation, data planning, and data interpretation.

"All of this PD has really allowed us to meet teachers where they are," says Castillo.

RESULTS

Teachers are comfortable exploring unfamiliar topics, and asking questions about new strategies. "I think, overall, all the professional development and support our teachers receive help them feel more confident in what they do," says Castillo. "Our approach gives them a starting point to do some of their own research or study in that area of mathematics."

Whatever level a student is at, DreamBox provides academic rigor and is a "safety net" to make sure students start where they need to and progress at the right pace. And, DreamBox functions much the same way for teachers—empowering educators to choose the time, place, and pace for their own professional learning so they can more effectively raise student achievement.

"We combine DreamBox with great instruction and differentiation in the classroom," says Castillo. "We can see growth in every single student—whether a Title or non-Title school—because DreamBox is providing them the opportunity to fill in those holes so they can access grade-level content sooner."

SPRINGFIELD FAST FACTS

Elementary Schools: **36**

Middle Schools: **9**

Employees: **3,500**

Enrollment: **25,000 students**



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