Math instruction is personalized in a digital environment at Washington district

DreamBox Learning helps to meet the potential of blended learning at Federal Way Public Schools

For the 21,000 students of Federal Way Public Schools near Seattle, the goal of the district's administrators is to involve as much interactive technology in learning as possible.

"With the Common Core State Standards and national science standards, there's a lot going on right now that's new for us to address," says Dawn Moye, blended learning manager. "A Race to the Top grant also is pushing us to increase math proficiency."

The goal is to strike a balance between instruction from teachers and delivering the content students need through technology, says Moye. "And that balance varies depending on the teacher and group of students. There needs to be flexibility in the classroom."

Blended learning provides the opportunity for that flexibility, as well as personalization, says Moye. And one of the tools utilized by Federal Way to support personalization and to bring technology into the classroom is DreamBox Learning® Math.

DreamBox Learning offers a personalized K8 math environment that combines a rigorous curriculum for deep conceptual understanding, a highly engaging game-like environment, and industry-leading Intelligent Adaptive Learning™ technology which dynamically adapts in real time to create millions of personalized learning paths tailored to each student's unique needs. The DreamBox student-centered environment differentiates content, pace and sequence for the highest levels of student achievement so every student can learn to think like a mathematician.

"When I see it in progress, I see the removal of a negative feeling," says Moye. "Students may not think they can master a certain technique, but then when it's presented in a different way, the playing field is leveled and they can master it."

DreamBox Learning was piloted at two schools in the second

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and third grades in May 2014. Now eight elementary and two middle schools in the district are using the program.

Teachers are asked to use the digital K8 curriculum for an hour per week in the classroom, and many use it for more time to personalize learning.

The reporting feature gives educators the ability to see who has mastered what concept. If a small group of students needs face-to-face instruction on a particular topic, the teacher can work with them while the rest of the class works independently. "Teachers use the powerful data in DreamBox Learning to modify what they're doing in the classroom," says Moye.

The number of students a teacher needs to work with at a time can be minimized with DreamBox Learning. "Teachers trust the system, they know it works," says Moye. "It facilitates a way to work with only a few students at a time while knowing that all students are working."

DreamBox Learning is successful in the classroom because students want to use it, says Moye. "Half the battle with math is getting them excited about doing it and achieving success. This is the first time we're seeing students gain self-esteem because of their math success. Kids think it's fun."

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