

- Name, School/district, context

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- What was the problem you were trying to solve?

There was an enormous turnover in teachers a year ago and due to that, we had 15 new teachers that needed support from mentors. We built a mentor program within our school to provide support and wanted to increase teacher retention at our school.

- Why was the work important to your context?

Schools are competing to keep teachers. We realized that in order to not have such high turnover, we would need to implement a system at school to help combat that issue. We needed to provide support for our new teachers to help them navigate their first year either as a teacher, or as new staff member at Graham-Kapowsin.

- Briefly outline the 'scope and sequence' of your work

We went to the mentor training, and used that as the basis for our program at school. We then were able to visit a mentor teacher in Vancouver School District to see their program in action. We met monthly, worked on goals, and reflections.

- As a result of the work, what are the significant impacts you are able to evidence? (What changed as a result of your work?)

As of right now, June 1, we have a 100% retention of our new teachers. This was ultimately the goal. We surveyed the new teachers in May and many of them stated that the additional support that the mentor program provided was invaluable to their first year at Graham-Kapowsin.

- What were your major learnings? (successes and challenges)

Our major success of the mentor program allowed new teachers to meet other teachers outside their discipline and to collaborate on how to better their profession. Graham-Kapowsin is a very large high school and it is often difficult for teachers to meet others outside their discipline. Many of the new teachers stated that it was nice to have an additional community within our large school and have someone they can always go to with any problems or concerns.

Our major challenge was finding time for our monthly meetings that allowed for high attendance. Teachers often had meetings after school and were not able to attend on a monthly basis. Meeting with their mentor teacher frequently was also a challenge for those pairs that did not have common planning or were in different departments. This is

something we will have to work out for the following school year, however, we do believe it will be a continuing challenge.

- What resources did you need to use or to create to support the work?

Our main resource came from the BEST training the both mentor leaders participated in back in June. We were also able to use the grant money to take a trip to Vancouver, WA to observe their districts mentor program. We were able to get a lot of ideas from their program that we plan to implement into next year's program.

- As a result of your work, about how many teachers were directly impacted? How do you know?

Directly impacted were the 15 new teachers and their mentors. The 15 new teachers filled out a survey at the end of the year indicating that the mentor program provided a lot of support for their first year here at GK. The mentor teachers also indicated that this program helped increase their ability to coach other teachers in their profession and guide their mentees to refine their craft.

- As a result of your work, about how many teachers were indirectly impacted? How do you know?

We believe that the whole building was indirectly impacted in some shape or form. Administration does not have to focus on new hires due to decreased retention. Departments across the building benefited from new teachers having the additional support outside of their department so PLC time was focused elsewhere.

- What words of wisdom do you have for the next teacher leader working to increase teacher leadership in their context?

Don't take your work for granted. Plan every angle. Don't be afraid of failure. We truly believe that all teachers needed additional support coming into a new building.