

Blue Valley School District employs MyLearningPlan® to maintain tight focus on student achievement and personalized learning through PLCs.

Providing “Education beyond Expectations” is no easy task, but the Blue Valley School District has been successful in achieving unprecedented academic success and personal growth for more than 20,000 students. Educating the whole child requires a management system to handle all of the details. Blue Valley selected MyLearningPlan to provide the infrastructure to align, plan, and manage a narrow, yet deep scope of professional learning activities. This uncompromising alignment of PD to the district’s strategic plan contributed to a 20% gain in student achievement.

Supporting Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

In 2003, Blue Valley was a high performing district, although student achievement remained flat, so district leaders created a plan centered on student achievement and personal growth. A systemic decision was made to expand effective PLCs to all schools, to serve as the required learning context. MyLearningPlan facilitates alignment of all professional development activities to one of the four district goals. Walter Carter, Director of Professional Development, observed, “By attaching all professional development activities to district goals aligned with the district

strategic plan, MyLearningPlan has helped us assure the alignment of professional development and our school improvement process.” APOC identified Blue Valley as an “exemplary district,” and “MyLearningPlan has been instrumental by providing an ongoing record of professional development, which is really the life of the PLC,” said Carter.

Blue Valley: At a Glance

- Located in metropolitan Kansas City
- 91 square miles
- 20,563 students
- 3,310 total staff members (including 1,793 teachers)
- 31 schools
- 15% minority population
- MyLearningPlan customer since 2003

Sustaining Focus

To support the district’s binding commitments, it was necessary that the culture of professional development become equally purposeful. Professional development used to consist of a “buffet of offerings,” stated Carter, but then the district identified four strategic focus areas, so adult learning needed to become more targeted, as well. MyLearningPlan provided an online catalog of carefully chosen and filtered learning opportunities. If an activity is not aligned to one of the four initiatives, it is simply not offered or approved. “It was a shock at first, but now the teachers get it,” reflected Carter. MyLearningPlan also manages out-of-district requests, which

ensures that participation in conferences is also aligned to district goals. This focus led to substantial increases in student learning—with many schools now at 100% proficiency.

FAST
AND
EASY

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—Walter Carter, Director of Professional Development, Blue Valley School District

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Reflecting on Learning

MyLearningPlan provides intuitive design tools to encourage intentional individual and team reflection following professional learning. “On our evaluation forms, we don’t ask any more if they liked the PD because it’s non-negotiable,” indicated Carter. Instead, Blue Valley engages staff in continuing conversation around: “What do we want students to know,” and “How do we know they have learned it.” The built-in report writer generates a variety of reports that help district leaders understand what educators need to learn more about, in order to shape future decisions.

Assessing Application and Impact

Application and Impact forms provide structure to track how professional learning is applied in the classroom, and the resulting impacts on students. These forms include fields for teachers to describe the new learning that they will apply, their purpose and expected changes in practice, the desired student outcomes, timeline, and how their results will be shared. They are also expected to select the district goals that are aligned to their efforts. MyLearningPlan Application and Impact Reflection forms collect information

about what happened and display data in easy-to-read reports that depict changes in practice and student outcomes. Forms include fields for quantitative results and analysis about success. MyLearningPlan promotes deep collaboration and expanded learning communities through sharing of results and products across teams. “We encourage teachers to share with other teachers to turn products into principles,” said Dr. Sue Dole, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services.

Moving Forward

With student achievement rising, ensuring sustainability is a current priority. Changing staff makes storing and accessing historical data critical to maintaining momentum, and MyLearningPlan safely archives all data. In addition, use of the PD Plan template will allow the district to group a number of related activities into a coherent plan. Managing professional learning at the PD Plan level will support ongoing learning and enable district leaders to ask probing questions in order to avoid “drift” from the main foci. MyLearningPlan is central in preserving disciplined professional development. Carter affirmed, “MyLearningPlan is the benchmark by which we measure all of our other programs.”



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