

Gilbert Public Schools utilizes MyLearningPlan[®] to engage all staff in meaningful learning activities to move professional practice forward.

In 2005, Gilbert leaders made a strategic decision to include all employees, including support staff, in their roll out of **MyLearningPlan** to ensure that every staff member continually increases their job-specific knowledge. Access to **MyLearningPlan** has enabled all employees the opportunity to grow, in addition to earning salary movement, certification hours or compliance credit. Employees are considering not just what they are learning, but why. The result is an environment of learning that permeates the system.

Empowering Staff

Gilbert district leaders sought a professional development management system that was user-friendly, web-based, and would eliminate the difficulties of managing hard copy forms, while facilitating streamlined end user access to information. They also hoped to empower all staff to take responsibility for their professional growth, and to be accountable for their own record-keeping. From groundskeepers to bus drivers to instructional personnel, Gilbert wanted to manage professional learning with an intuitive and

visually appealing approach. "I wasn't thinking that it would have this effect, but MyLearningPlan helped us to move forward and educate our employees about true professional learning," said Andrew Szczepaniak, Director of Professional Development for Gilbert Public Schools.

Gilbert: At a Glance

- Metropolitan suburb east of Phoenix, AZ
- Fastest growing city (over 100,000 people) in the county
- 76 square miles
- 38,785 students
- 5,200 total staff members (including 2,500 teachers)
- 40 schools
- 29% minority population
- MyLearningPlan customer since 2005

Enrolling and Approving

The district needed to stop printing catalogs to provide increased accessibility of offerings. MyLearningPlan permits viewing of available activities in the online district catalog, filtered by specific criteria. MyLearningPlan also allowed the PD department to add new activities to the catalog on a continuing basis. Staff can enroll or request pre-approval with a single click, and dropping an activity is just as easy. The goal alignment assures approvers that activities are relevant and meaningful. If a wait list is activated and space becomes available, the next person in the queue is automatically enrolled and sent an email notification. The wait list

enrollment report is a powerful tool for communication from the district office to school buildings. "The ease of use and level of customer support provided by MyLearningPlan is phenomenal," said Szczepaniak.

**FAST
AND
EASY**

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—Andrew Szczepaniak, Director of Professional Development,
Gilbert Public Schools

Gaining Commitment

To obtain funding for the system, the Professional Development Director met with the key district executive stakeholders, to demonstrate the job-specific benefits of using MyLearningPlan. Gilbert leaders ensured that information uploaded to online portfolios was accurate, and they created clear training materials for each user type. Szczepaniak indicated that employees readily appreciated the interactivity of the system, as well as the ability to see, sort, and print a record of their professional development endeavors.

Ensuring Consistency

Prior to launching MyLearningPlan, Gilbert employed two full-time people to manage the district's PD activities. Using MyLearningPlan allowed the district to re-deploy one person on other responsibilities, saving the district \$25,000. In addition, MyLearningPlan ensures that authorization guidelines are followed consistently, and hours are allocated swiftly and fairly via the prior approval and final approval routing protocols. Principals can access their own and staff portfolios, assisting them in making equitable and responsive decisions, and providing data to support targeted instructional interventions. Szczepaniak asserted,

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—Korry Brenner, M.Ed., NBCT,
Principal, Canyon Rim Elementary

**DO IT
BETTER WITH
TECHNOLOGY!**

"I've heard comments that adopting MyLearningPlan is one of the best decisions the district has made."

Encouraging Application

All PD activities include a mandatory online evaluation, which employees are required to complete before gaining credit for an activity. "Our evaluations have been much more thoughtful and focused," stated Szczepaniak. Instructors have the timely and meaningful data they need to refine their courses, and instructor cost reports support data-driven budgeting. "MLP provides a comprehensive, efficient way to stay informed about the professional development of my staff. This tool is a positive catalyst for ongoing conversations between our teams and myself regarding new learning they are applying to their instructional practices," indicated Korry Brenner, M.Ed., NBCT, Principal, Canyon Rim Elementary.

Moving Forward

Gilbert is fostering increased use of TeamRooms to support sustained collegial learning through online discussion tools linked to specific activities. TeamRooms encourage collaborative reflection and generation around classroom application. These conversations extend learning beyond the parameters of scheduled PD time and foster increased transfer of knowledge into daily practice. Szczepaniak stated, "MyLearningPlan has helped our employees to see themselves as learners who are growing and always improving."