

“Sharing Data Skills and Growing as a Leader”

| By Colleen McKenzie

The 2013-2014 academic year at DePaul Catholic in Philadelphia was a year that would improve, strengthen and refocus my teaching. I had been teaching third grade for three years and was fairly comfortable teaching in my classroom, but I was yearning for a change.

Seton Blended Learning arrived to pilot from Kindergarten through 2nd grade. I had been very interested in being a part of this program so much so that I moved from teaching third grade to second grade.

The program brought an extremely strong and powerful leader to our school to help support, coach and guide us along our implementation of blended learning. Our focus during the first month was practicing tight transitions and procedures to ensure that learning time would be maximized.

After a few weeks, I was able to understand how to use this program and data to help me meet my students' needs. I used the diagnostic tests and the NWEA results to help guide my instructional groups and target their needs better than I had before. I used the I-Ready results to formatively assess my students to ensure their understanding of each standard. By January, 100% met or exceeded of my students were meeting their RIT goal in Math and 86% met or exceeded their RIT goal in Reading. I was not only holding myself accountable my data but my students were holding themselves accountable for their own data. They wanted to succeed and improve. It was certain that his program was helping me reach

my students more than I ever thought possible.

In the spring, I started to think about the summer and what would happen to them. Would they experience summer learning loss? How could we help prevent that from happening? I had so much evidence of their success in my data that I wanted my scholars to continue their progress and not regress.

I spent time reading and researching summer learning loss. I discovered that there was a program designed to prevent summer learning loss in Philadelphia called Springboard Collaborative. After much hard work and determination, our school formed a partnership with Springboard. I was selected as a site manager for the program and led our teachers to average 4.1 months of reading growth in 5 weeks.

As a result of the success of within Seton Blended Learning and Springboard, I was accepted KIPP's Emerging Leaders Program. Already, I see myself growing as a leader and I am excited to put my skills into practice.

Data allowed me to tailor my instruction, challenge students, fill in gaps in my instruction and allow each student in my class to succeed. It has given me the motivation to continue following my best practices and also learn new ones. My success within using Data has given me opportunities to prevent summer learning in my school and improve my leadership skills. I hope to bring what I have learned to help other teachers and schools in the future.

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