



Increasing Learning Gains for All Students through Connection

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2018-2019 Cohort

ABSTRACT

How do you increase learning gains for all students? This was the question we had to ask ourselves after three years of school-wide data continued to show a concern in the learning gains for our students. After data dives, hard conversations, and reflection, our school community was ready to tackle this glaring issue. Strategically, throughout the year, we charted our roadmap. Join us on our journey as we discovered how goal setting, motivation, accountability, and making connections have the power to increase student achievement and directly impact learning gains.

INTRODUCTION

Collins Elementary School is one of the largest elementary schools in Hillsborough County, Florida with over 1,070 students in grades PK-5. We are a diverse school with 39% White, 29% Hispanic, 20% African American, 8% Multi-racial, and 4% suAsian/Islander students. 44% of our students receive free/reduced lunch (FRL). Our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) population consists of 20% of our students and our English Language Learners (ELL) population is 7%.

Collins is located in the Panther Trace subdivision, which is an upper middle class neighborhood in Riverview, a suburb of Tampa. The school has a positive image and is supported by the parents and community. We are a neighborhood school, with an active PTA, supported by the community with high parent involvement. Collins was awarded the Golden School Award, the Five Star School Award, and is a National PTA School of Excellence.

Our school mission states Collins Elementary students will be compassionate, respectful, responsible learners who become successful citizens. We feel strongly about growth for the whole child. Along with our focus on academics, we put an emphasis on social-emotional growth for our students. This year our academic goal is that student achievement will increase when we focus on learning gains for all students with an emphasis on assessment. Our culture goal is the Collins team will focus on character education, mentoring and support to ensure a safe, caring environment. Our theme for this year is "Together We Can..." Together we can achieve more, be more, and make THE difference for our children.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For the past three years our learning gains have been around 50%, indicating that only 50% of our intermediate students are making a year's worth of academic growth (learning gains). In addition, our data shows that only 34% of our bottom quartile students in both Reading and Math (the lowest 25% of our intermediate students) made learning gains. This has been an issue for the past three years, since the state changed the assessment to match the Florida Standards. Collins earned an "A" from the state for 10 straight years. We earned a "B" on the benchmark year (the year they changed the assessment) and we have earned a "C" for the last three years. We have spent three years improving our Professional Learning

Communities (PLC), team planning, unpacking the Florida Standards, differentiating instruction, working on engagement, and doing our best to address the learning gains issue. It is imperative that students make adequate yearly progress and we must find a way to improve our learning gains.

Everyone on our campus is a key stakeholder. We must all do our part to ensure our students are happy and engaged. We must work together to mentor and assist any student that is struggling. Administration, student services, classroom teachers, support staff, custodians and bus drivers, it does not matter what your “role” is, we are all key stakeholders. We must pull together, tackle the difficult issues, and make a difference for our students. Individually we cannot make this happen, but TOGETHER WE CAN!

As a leader, I believe true collaboration is necessary to address the issue of ensuring learning gains for every student. To grow as a leader, I need to seek feedback and solutions from our stakeholders. To empower my teachers and staff, I need to listen more, and speak less. My typical reaction is to “solve the problem” and/or “provide suggestions,” which I have done for the past three years. I plan to focus on the solutions others can bring to the table to encourage all teachers and staff to be involved in the process. By sharing the responsibility and allowing teachers and staff to be a part of the solution, additional teacher leaders will naturally be created. These leaders will play an integral part in our journey and will be instrumental in sustaining our success.

We will measure our progress towards our goal during monthly Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meetings, quarterly formative assessments, analyzing growth from iReady diagnostic 2, and 3, and Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) data.

METHODS

With a focus on increasing students’ learning gains, our faculty and staff engaged in multiple data discussions, school visits, authentic PLC work, and we have shared educational articles weekly through our Monday Morning Minute. A sample of the articles shared are:

- 5 Research-Based Tips for Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback
- Teaching Strategies: Build Solid Relationships with Students
- The Seven Habits of Highly Affective Teachers
- 5 ways Being Thankful is Really Good for You
- 10 Tips to Stay Focused Before Holiday Break
- Important Questions to Ask Your Students
- Discovering Your Students’ Answers to These Questions Can Help You Create Positive Conditions for Learning
- Top 10 Resources to Help Teachers Manage Their Time
- Teacher Wellness - Building Resilience, Preventing Burnout
- How Do You Motivate Students?

- Fostering Positive Academic Mindsets in Students
- Be Thankful
- Keep Learning Going During Holiday & Vacation Times
- New Year's Resolutions for Teachers
- Second Half Survival: 4 Tips to Get You From January to June
- Revisiting Classroom Rules
- Social-Emotional Learning Starts With Adults
- Kindness Makes You Happy...and Happiness Makes You Kind
- 7 Reasons You Should See the Good in Everyone Around You
- The Love and Learning in a Classroom
- Teachers Need Spring Break Too!
- Avoiding Spring Breakdown: Five Tips to Motivate Students at the End of the Year
- How to Finish the School Year Strong

In addition, we developed a system to share our Cahn progress with our stakeholders and solicit their feedback to continue to address our project focus. Volunteers joined us for monthly "Pros & Cahn" meetings.

Working together with our teachers during pre-planning, during PLCs, during ILT, and during Pros & Cahn meetings, I have developed a deeper understanding that one of the most difficult challenges we are facing is working to keep our students motivated to stay engaged in their learning. I also know that what we are asking teachers to do is difficult, and it is time consuming. Teachers are struggling to find the time to create performance scales and common assessments while planning meaningful and relevant lessons. To address the time issue for teachers, we hold one faculty meeting a month (first Tuesday) and all other afternoons are dedicated to teacher planning time or PLCs. In order to address student motivation for their learning and building a partnership between school and home, we devised a plan to ensure every intermediate child had the opportunity to set their own academic goals and review them with their parent, teacher and an administrator.

We are climbing a mountain and we have a long journey ahead of us! We are prepared and ready for the journey. As of December, two of our six PLC teams were still struggling to understand the process of clustering standards and developing performance scales. We consistently supported those teams in order for them to be successful. Of the four PLCs that understand clustering and performance scales, we worked to assist those teams with developing common assessments so students' understanding of the standard could be monitored in a consistent manner. This also allowed them to discuss student performance and plan how to address learning gaps, which obviously affects learning gains.

The specific actions we have taken are outlined in the chart below:

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Timeframe	Evidence of Completion
Instructional Leadership Team is selected and conducts a site visit at Lanier Elementary	Fellow/Ally/ILT members	May 2018	Upon completion, teacher leaders (18-19 ILT) determine a need to cluster standards and create performance scales to further impact assessment.
Brainstorming session with Damar Roman (Area PD Specialist)	Fellow/Ally/ILT members	May 2018	Developed a plan to support our teachers as they embarked on the Performance Scale work.
Grade level teams cluster standards over the summer	Grade level teams	July 2018	All grade level teams met to cluster ELA standards and created an instructional calendar for the year.
Analyzed state assessment data to determine area of need.	Fellow/Ally	July 2018	Glaring issue is students, especially our bottom quartile, are not making adequate learning gains.
Identified our project question	Fellow/Ally	July 2018	What do we need to do to increase learning gains for every student?
Preplanning data review training	Fellow	August 2018	Teachers and staff identified the positives and negatives of school wide data. We compared our data to schools with comparable demographics and determined that we were underperforming and student achievement was affected. The large majority of schools with identical FRL rates earn a state school grade of an A each year.
Teachers determined school-wide focus, which aligned with project.	Fellow/APs/Ally/Faculty	August 2018	After reviewing the data, teachers and staff determined we needed to focus on learning gains. In addition, teachers completed the fishbone protocol to determine an area of focus for their grade level PLC. They used their focus to set their first PLC goal.
Provided teachers with specific bottom quartile students and points needed to attain learning gains	APs	August 2018	Teachers were able to identify which students fell into our bottom quartile for reading and math.

Restructured ILT meetings	Fellow/APs	August 2018	The ILT began to focus on school wide data and how to address the issue of learning gains. We no longer use “Leadership” meetings to disseminate “housekeeping” business. We rely on the ILT to uncover issues, determine roadblocks, suggest solutions, identify PD needs, and carry the work back to their respective PLCs
ILT Identified PD focus for 1 st semester	Fellow/Ally/APs/ILT members	August 2018	In the first semester, we scheduled professional development for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Scales • From Performance Scales to Assessment • Student Engagement • iReady Growth Monitoring
ILT identified “look fors” for the 2018-2019 school year	Fellow/Ally/APs/ILT members	August 2018	The ILT determined what three look-fors we would aim to see in daily instruction with a focus on what we would observe from teachers, from students, and in the classroom environment. They decided the final 3 look-fors would be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher will promote and facilitate active thinking. 2. The students will show active learning behaviors. 3. The essential question/I can statement will be evident in the classroom with optional performance scales posted for ELA.
Created iReady computer lab schedule to guarantee each teacher 50 uninterrupted minutes per week.	APs/ILT members	August 2018	Schedule posted utilizing five computer labs and three mobile carts to give students weekly access to iReady.
K-5 students begin iReady Diagnostic 1 assessment	Students	August 2018	Once all grade levels have completed testing, school data will be shared with ILT.
Performance Scale PD	PD Specialist/Entire Faculty	August 2018	This PD built on our previous year’s work with unpacking the standards. This training gave our teachers a better understanding of using

			performance scales to enhance instruction.
Student Engagement PD	Ally/TTD/Teachers	September 2018	Teachers had the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities that showcased genuine student engagement versus compliance.
From Performance Scales to Assessment PD	PD Specialist	October 2018	Interested teachers (2/3 of our faculty) learned how to create common assessments based on the performance scale and complexity level of the standard.
Determined process for student goal setting	Fellow/Ally/APs/TTD	October 2018	Brainstorming session for how we will accomplish the task of setting goals with 360 4 th and 5th graders with an emphasis on including their parents and teachers in the process.
Set dates for CAHN focus group: "Pros and Cahn"	Fellow/Ally	October 2018	As a result of our October Fall Summit, we wanted to share information and gain feedback/insight from our staff. Dates were determined and everyone was invited to attend.
Analyzed school wide data from iReady Diagnostic 1 and identified school wide needs	Fellow/Ally/APs/ILT	October 2018	ILT analyzed data, determined the primary need was phonics, and intermediate need was vocabulary. All teachers committed to focusing on these skills to enhance learning.
PLC Day- Conducted hour long PLC meetings during the school day with all admin present to survey staff and gauge PLC productivity	Fellow/Ally/APs/TTD/Grade level teams	November 2018	Grade level teams are all at various levels of productivity/performance regarding use of performance scales. We solicited feedback for how to provide support.
Held first "Pros and Cahn" meeting	Fellow/Ally/TTD/APs/Variou us Teachers (volunteers)	November 2018	25 teachers attended this optional meeting. We shared an update of our project's progress. We answered questions and we asked the participants to work together to answer the Theory of Action questions that were student focused.
ILT Root Cause and Reverse Brainstorming Session	Ally/TTD/ILT	November 2018	Based on the data we received from PLC day, we created a training to help ILT members identify the root cause that was holding their team back. ILT members then participated in a

			reverse brainstorming session to determine countermeasures and develop an action plan to move their team forward. We ended the session with affirmations to one another, this proved to be a moving experience for our teachers.
Student Goal Setting Night	Fellow/Ally/TTD/APs/Teachers/ Parents/Students	November 2018	Fellow gave an overview of the importance of goal setting and intrinsic motivation and APs explained the data and goal-setting sheet. Parents, students, and teachers worked together to determine the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academically, what do I enjoy most about school? 2. Academically, what is a challenge for me? 3. What academic goal would I like to set for myself? 4. How can my parent help me? 5. How can my teacher help me? 6. How can my principal or assistant principal help me? 7. What three things do I need to do to achieve my goal?
Held 2 nd "Pros and Cahn" meeting	Fellow/Ally/TTD/APs/Various Teachers (volunteers)	December 2018	21 teachers attended this optional meeting. We shared an update of our project's progress (goal setting). We answered questions and we asked the participants to work together to answer the Theory of Action questions that were teacher focused.
Goal Setting Conferences	Fellow/APs/Students	December 2018	Administrators are meeting with each 4 th and 5 th grade student to review their goals and determine the next steps. It should be noted that teachers assisted students with completing their goal setting form if they were unable to attend Goal Setting Night.
K-5 students begin Diagnostic 2 for iReady assessment	Students	December 2018	Once all grade levels had completed testing, school data was shared with ILT.
Held 3 rd "Pros and Cahn" meeting	Fellow/Ally/TTD/APs/Various Teachers (volunteers)	January 2019	16 teachers attended this optional meeting. We shared an update of our project's progress. We answered

			questions and we asked the participants to work together to answer the Theory of Action questions that were administration focused.
iReady Chat and Chew	TTDs/Various Teachers	January 2019	Interested teachers stopped by during planning times to discuss iReady goal setting, classroom implementation, and classroom/student celebrations.
Brainstorming session with Damar Roman (Area PD Specialist)	Fellow/Ally/APs/TTD	January 2019	Developed a professional development plan for the remainder of the school year to support our teachers.
Held 4 th "Pros and Cahn" meeting	Fellow/Ally/TTD/APs/Various Teachers (volunteers)	February 2019	Reviewed school-wide iReady data and celebrated growth. Discussed diagnostic 3 goal setting in K-5 classrooms.
Brainstorming session with Damar Roman (Area PD Specialist)	Ally/APs/TTD	February 2019	Developed a specific professional development session for our March ILT meeting and planned the process for our required April inservice to review/reflect/recluster standards.
ALT Walkthroughs	Fellow/Ally/TTD/APs/ALT	February 2019	Area Leadership Team accompanied school staff on classrooms walkthroughs in grades 3-4-5. Feedback received suggested common planning, clear instructional focus, and engaged students were evident in classrooms.
Learning Walks	Fellow/TTD/Various Teachers	February 2019	Teachers volunteered to open their classrooms to showcase effective teaching strategies. Interested teachers visited specific classrooms to observe practices. TTDs provided peer coaching during the visits and visiting teachers reflected on their visit and how they can implement strategies in their own classrooms.
ILT Meeting	Fellow/Ally/TTD/ILT	February 2019	Discussed student placement and how to cluster students more effectively to ensure learning gains for all students. Discussed implementing AVID in grades 4-5 to enhance organization, growth mindset, and goal setting.
Applied for AVID program	Fellow/AP	February 2019	Completed application to implement the Elementary AVID program at our school. Received notification that we

			were approved. AVID will begin in grades 4-5 in August 2019.
Goal Setting Conferences	Fellow/APs/Students	March-April 2019	Administrators met with each 4th and 5 th grade student to review their goals, celebrate accomplishments, and determine the next steps. Each student received a "Together We Can CRUSH Goals" lanyard and personal goal tracking card.
ILT Meeting with Damar Roman (Area PD Specialist)	Fellow/Ally/APs/TTD	March 2019	PD Specialist walked ILT through the planned review/reflect/recluster process. ILT members were positive and excited to have the opportunity to complete this as a team at April PD.
AVID Inservice Day	Fellow/Ally/AP/TTD	April 2019	Participated in preliminary training day at an active AVID site. Gained insight into the steps we will take to implement AVID in grades 4-5 next year.
State Assessments and End of Year District Tests begin	Students	April-May 2019	3 rd grade FSA ELA assessed 4/2, 4 th -5 th grade FSA Writing assessed 4/2. 4 th -5 th grade ELA assessed 5/1-5/2, 3 rd -5 th grade Math assessed 5/7-5/8, 5 th grade Science assessed 5/9. Various K-5 district assessments begin 5/1.
K-5 students begin Diagnostic 3 for iReady assessment	Students	April-May 2019	Once all grade levels had completed testing, school data was shared with ILT.
Review/Reflect/Recluster Training	Instructional Faculty	April 2019	Teachers worked together to complete recluster of standards for the 2019-2020 school year.
Vertical PLC	Instructional Faculty	May 2019	Teachers participated in PLC discussion with sending and receiving grade level to discuss strength and focus area of the current group of students.
Goal Setting Conferences	Fellow/APs/Students	May 2019	Administrators met with specific 4th and 5 th grade students to review their goals, celebrate accomplishments, and determine the next steps.

The last eleven months have been riddled with challenges. With any new initiative or change process, the biggest challenge most people face will be teacher buy-in and push back. We are no exception to this rule. Even though we started the year with 100% of our teachers determining our focus (increasing student learning gains), it was difficult to keep the intense

passion surrounding the subject at the forefront of all teachers' minds. We couldn't be there every time they were planning, teaching, re-teaching, assessing, giving feedback to students, and making critical decisions for students. We had to trust that each and every teacher was laser focused on increasing learning gains, and that didn't always happen. Teachers are human and they fall into the traps of "comfort." Comfort in what is easy, comfort in what takes less time, and comfort in what they have always known. It isn't because they don't WANT to address learning gains, it is just because time is of the essence and what they have always done is simply, easier and more comfortable. We continued to keep our focus in the forefront of their minds through PLC conversations around standards, performance scales, and common assessments. We held monthly Pros & Cahn meetings to keep our team informed and requested teacher feedback. We asked questions and offered to work alongside of them but as the year comes to a close, it is clear that buy in and implementation with fidelity is one of our challenges.

Another challenge we faced was lack of comparable data. Our state measures learning gains on intermediate students, students that have a previous year's Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) score. The students take the FSA once a year in third, fourth, and fifth grade. Our learning gains are derived from the growth of students moving from third to fourth grade, and fourth grade to fifth grade. It also measures retained third graders, but that is a very small number. As we made our way through the year, clustering standards, creating performance scales, and attempting to monitor with common assessments, there wasn't an accurate way to measure true learning gains, as measured by the state of Florida. Our students take reading, writing, and math formative assessments throughout the year and participate in three iReady assessments in reading and math, but the data we receive is not comparable to FSA data. We closely monitored formative assessment data and iReady diagnostic data to determine if students were making learning gains. We cannot be positive how this will translate to our actual FSA data.

Time is always a barrier. Educators, in general, always need more time. More time to plan, more time to instruct, more time to reteach, these are things that our teachers are constantly requesting. We can't multiply the minutes in the day, but we do our best to protect their planning time after school so they can work with their colleagues. Though our contract allows an afternoon meeting every Tuesday, we intentionally schedule only one faculty meeting a month to give teachers time to work together in their PLCs. Time was also a barrier for administration as we tried to meet with students for goal setting conferences. There were often times when goal setting was scheduled and an emergency would arise, or an unexpected circumstance that had to be addressed. At times this kept us from meeting with our students for individual goal conversations and over time it became frustrating. We thought of many ways to improve the goal setting process to ensure time isn't a barrier next year. That will be discussed in detail below.

Another challenge was making accommodations for the parents and students that were unable to attend goal setting night. If all 360 intermediate families attended, we would have been able to share the data and explain the process to all parents at once and every student would have had the chance to formulate his/her goal with a parent. We felt like the parents/students that didn't attend were at a disadvantage because they weren't able to hear the why behind the goal setting activity. We did eventually meet with every child and formulate goals with them but their parent was not involved in the process, which was disappointing. We also had to rely on the teachers for these students and they were unsure of the process since this was a new initiative. This definitely created a challenge and we have several ideas for how to enhance the process next year.

Our intermediate students' lack of writing skills was the last challenge we uncovered. While analyzing learning gain data, it was evident that part of our issue is the writing expectation and assessment given to fourth and fifth graders. The text based writing assessment is factored into the child's FSA Reading score and either contributes to or negatively impacts their learning gains. For instance, a third grade child takes the FSA Reading and gets a scale score. The same child takes the FSA Reading and the FSA Writing in 4th grade. The two tests are merged together into one scale score for FSA ELA. It quickly became clear that the struggle our students were having with writing was dramatically impacting their learning gains in the area of Reading. Our state transitioned over the past few years with the text-based writing assessment and there have been shifts in writing instruction and with teachers finding "time" to teach students to be true writers. We made it a priority to visit other Cahn Fellow's schools each time we were in New York. We were always intrigued by the level of writing we saw showcased in the hallways of the schools we visited. After our third visit, we started asking questions and determined that the writing curriculum being used across all of the schools we visited was Lucy Calkins' Units of Study. We determined one of our greatest challenges was the lack of true writer's workshop happening across our campus, K-5. We had to address this challenge as soon as possible.

Challenges are always difficult, but how you address them determines if they are a growth opportunity or simply a road block. We learned from each of our challenges and did our best to implement strategies to address the issue this year or solutions for the future. As a leader, I am frustrated when teachers exhibit willingness in a large group setting but return to their classrooms, shut the door, and do exactly what they have always done. They express that they see the big picture, and even agree with the "why," yet their actions don't always match the expectations. We continued to provide them with individualized and small group setting professional development and offered support to assist in any way we could, including doing the work right alongside them. As a leader, I am constantly reflecting on how to better support our teachers and encourage them to continue to hone their skills to ensure learning gains for all of our students.

RESULTS

As we embarked on finding ways to increase student learning gains, I tried to support the ideas of our teachers and staff. There were so many facets wrapped up into our work this year but the largest outcome, from my perspective, was individualized goal setting with our students. The time we spent building relationships, making connections, encouraging progress, and celebrating success was impactful. Our intermediate students were excited to have one-on-one time with an administrator to discuss their individual goals. Students mentioned that they took their schoolwork and assessments more serious because they knew we (parents/teachers/administrators) were monitoring their progress. Students also mentioned that they wanted to do their best to see if they could “crush” their goals. Students seemed to be more intrinsically motivated than in the past. Furthermore, we built specific connections with our bottom quartile students. We utilized one of our intermediate units to pull small resource groups of students in the bottom quartile for reading and math. These groups were based on skill deficits and the teacher worked with the students to address foundational skills and address the students’ confidence. The connections made during these bi-weekly sessions truly made a difference for these students. The data indicated that almost 100% of the students the resource teacher worked with made learning gains over the course of the year, as measured by iReady fall/spring diagnostics.

Our actions this year had a major impact on the school, teachers, and most importantly the students. In addition to the support provided to teachers for planning and instruction, our goal setting helped to build and foster relationships between the students, their parents, the teachers, and administration. Setting goals and making a plan is a skill students need to develop and carry with them through life. Starting now, in elementary school, was an impactful part of their learning.

We chose to use iReady to determine the percentage of learning gains for our students. Though this isn’t comparable data to the actual FSA, it is the only consistent measure we have from the beginning of the year to the end of the year in both subject areas. We compared iReady diagnostic scale scores for reading and math from the fall assessment and the spring assessment. iReady provides an annual expected growth for each child, it is a certain number of points that the child should increase between the fall and spring assessment. The data indicates that the majority of our intermediate students showed learning gains in both subject areas over the course of the school year. Our current data (Fall 2018 compared to Spring 2019) shows:

- Fourth grade Reading - 74% of students showed at least a 60% growth rate towards their individual typical growth goal. 62% of students met or exceeded their typical growth goal.
- Fourth grade Math - 55% of students showed at least a 60% growth rate towards their individual typical growth goal. 34% of students met or exceeded their typical growth goal.

- Fourth grade Bottom Quartile Reading – 83% of bottom quartile students increased their iReady scale score
- Fourth grade Bottom Quartile Math - 73% of bottom quartile students increased their iReady scale score
- Fifth grade Reading - 70% of students showed at least a 60% growth rate towards their individual typical growth goal. 61% of students met or exceeded their typical growth goal.
- Fifth grade Math - 61% of students showed at least a 60% growth rate towards their individual typical growth goal. 39% of students met or exceeded their typical growth goal.
- Fifth grade Bottom Quartile Reading - 84% of bottom quartile students increased their iReady scale score
- Fifth grade Bottom Quartile Math - 85% of bottom quartile students increased their iReady scale score

Though we are a “far cry” from 100% learning gains, we are pleased with the progress and feel like all of the efforts we put into this year through teacher support, goal setting, and connections impacted the lives of our students. We expect our FSA data to show learning gain increases in each subject area as well as our bottom quartile.

The feedback from parents that participated in our goal setting night was extremely positive. They were appreciative of having time set aside to have data explained, help their student set goals, and create a plan of action. Due to the overwhelming response, we will continue this work next school year, but will modify the process for goal setting follow up and accountability checks. Goal setting folders will be kept in each classroom so teachers and students can have access to them. This will allow data to be updated often and will allow the teachers to monitor goals also. When administration is walking through classrooms, we will be able to reference goal folders right away. This should allow for more time spent on meaningful goal setting conversations and less time locating and recording data. In the 2019-2020 school year, Collins will become an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) school. Goal setting will align with our AVID implementation and focus on organization and growth mindset. In addition, we will incorporate new writing curriculum based on our school visits in New York City. We will continue to support teachers and ensure instruction meets the needs of our students. We will continue to focus on our standards and monitor our assessments to ensure we are re-teaching as needed. We will continue to reflect and perfect our work until 100% of our students make learning gains.

REFLECTIONS

My participation in the Cahn Fellows Program impacted my work throughout the year in numerous ways. First, it required constant reflection. The sessions were planned with in-depth

levels of reflection which I carried throughout the year. I have used many of the reflection activities we learned during the Fall Institute with staff members and throughout the school year. I have a deeper understanding of micro-aggressions and implicit biases and how they can derail the success of our students. The lens I now look through clarified and focused situations that I needed to address to ensure all students and stakeholders are equally respected. My participation in the program taught me to take better care of myself and find a true home-work balance. I learned to make myself a priority so I will be rested and available when others need me. In turn, I learned to expect my staff to find balance and ensure they are meeting their own needs. The relationships I made with other Cahn Fellows fostered friendships and allowed me to visit multiple school sites over the last eleven months. One of the most meaningful impacts were the ideas we brought back to Collins after these school visits. The work we did across our campus has certainly impacted learning gains and I can't wait to see what the summative data shows.

I have learned that I try to do it all....and I cannot. I struggle with delegation and asking for assistance. I struggle with procrastination and balancing "tasks" over time with people. I am learning to delegate better and using my Ally, as well as my assistant principals and ILT, to assist with our work this year. If I had to pinpoint the most impactful event for my own leadership growth, I would say it happened in Gettysburg. Specifically, fence building where our "leader" didn't speak and the knowledge that General Meade was a man of few words. Those two experiences impacted my leadership style. Though I have always prided myself on "gathering" ideas from others, I know I also had my own ideas for how to move forward and typically stayed the course and used their feedback to support my own agenda. Because I am naturally social and can comfortably provide insight in most situations, it is really difficult to stay quiet or keep my ideas to myself. I find myself thinking about the fence building experience often and reminding myself to hold my thoughts and allow others to contribute ideas. This is especially difficult when the room is quiet and people are looking to me for my ideas or perhaps, just want to be told what I expect them to do. I am far from where I want to be, but I feel like I am improving in this area, which is impacting my growth as a leader.

My personal leadership goal is to have others see me as a servant leader, a leader who is willing to come along side of them and participate in the work, not just dictate what needs to be done. I want others to see me as someone that truly cares about them, as a person, first. I want to be a leader that communicates clearly and ensures a comfortable, supportive environment where each person can thrive and be their best. I hope to be a leader that earns genuine respect and trust from those in the organization because of the relationships that have been formed. I believe when everyone in the organization works together towards one common goal (increasing learning gains), anything is possible. In my inner core, I really do believe in our theme for this year...Together We Can.

ALLY:

This program has really allowed me to reflect on myself as a teacher leader and a future assistant principal. I have really reflected on communication areas. While I have always known to be clear when stating expectations, just like in the classroom with students, I feel that some adults need more explicit instructions than others. This is really important when rolling out new initiatives. Sharing the “why” is so important in order to get buy-in from all parties. Notably, I have discovered that my problem-solving nature can be a strength and an area of focus. My brain instantly searches for solutions. While this is helpful and efficient time wise, it doesn't allow others to grow as professionals if I just provide them a solution. I am trying to step back from instantly offering solutions to asking probing questions and allowing others to problem solve as well. The sessions from the Fall Summit that focused on the Five Whys and Identifying the Root Cause have been strategies that I have implemented over the last seven months. I was able to guide our ILT members through the 5 Whys along with a reverse brainstorming session during a fall meeting in order for them to problem solve for their team and develop and action plan to move forward.

This journey alongside Rebecca Sargable was a blessing. She is a leader that I have respected throughout my career and has pushed me to move forward and take on more leadership roles. She has shaped me into the educator that I am today and I am grateful to the Cahn Fellows Program for providing us an opportunity to delve deeper and reflect on what is necessary to move our school forward.

FELLOW:

It has been a joy to watch Lindsey grow and lead throughout this process. Over the time we have been in the Cahn Fellows program, she has enhanced her leadership skills greatly. She has learned to listen more than she talks, been able to see things from others' perspectives, been willing to accept ideas that differ from her own, and organize and plan multiple professional development activities to ensure teachers are prepared. In addition, she has become comfortable working with and planning activities for intermediate students, desegregating data for students in our bottom quartile, and working with students in the intermediate grade levels. I supported her development by allowing her the freedom to plan activities, lead conversations, and make decisions that she thought was best. I trust her judgement and know she has the best interest of our students at heart. Watching her grow as a professional, and as an individual, over the past ten years has been so rewarding. I have watched her evolve from a beginning teacher to a teacher leader to a teacher talent developer. Our participation in the Cahn Fellows program strengthened her leadership abilities; I know she will be an incredible assistant principal in the near future. The only regret is that I will have to let her go, and that will not be easy...but it will be exciting, nonetheless.

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