

Principals connect dots between standards, instruction

More than 300 principals, assistant principals, literacy coaches and district academic leaders in Mobile County Public Schools recently participated in nearly two weeks of professional learning to connect the dots between standards, instruction, testing and student achievement.

"Data shows that when we align rigorous standards-based instruction and assessment, students learn more and achievement levels increase," said Karen Mohr, Chief Academic Officer for Mobile County Public Schools. "The summer training focused on how to unwrap the College and Career Ready Standards and develop aligned, rigorous instruction and assessments that will give teachers timely, credible evidence of what material students understand, and what students can do with the material."

"We know that there are many pockets of excellence in our district, but every student deserves excellence," Mohr said. "The quote we live by is 'teaching is only as good as the learning that takes place.' We have to make sure all students are learning. Quality classroom assessments help us discern what students know and what content students know how to use."

The training was based on Larry Ainsworth's book "Common Formative Assessments 2.0." Ainsworth and three other presenters visited Mobile County in June and July to train district administrators. The goal of the training, Ainsworth said, was to give "teachers...a simple but effective process to create short classroom assessments directly aligned to our Alabama College and Career Ready Standards. [Teachers can]...then use the assessment results to adjust their instruction as needed to

better meet the learning needs of all students," Ainsworth said. The assessments teachers will collaboratively develop this spring will be the culmination of their work to unwrap and align standards and develop rigorous instruction and activities, Mohr said.

According to Ainsworth, the process is not just for teachers. Students will directly benefit from the use of CFAs, he said. "By sharing the assessment results with students, all students will know where they need to go next in their learning so they can make whatever adjustments they need to improve," Ainsworth explained.

The CFA training will allow "busy classroom teachers ... to collaborate with colleagues at their grade level or in their department to create quality instructional units and assessments

matched to the rigor of our state standards. By using these CFAs within their curriculum throughout the school year, teachers will be able to continually monitor and adjust their teaching, and students will be able to continually monitor and adjust their learning," Ainsworth said.

Mohr and Ainsworth explained that when the CFA 2.0 process is fully in place, it will align with other instructional support tools to prepare students to achieve greater success on the ACT Aspire exam, and to graduate College and Career Ready.



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