

## Iredell-Statesville Schools

### Challenge

With 35 schools and more than 21,000 students, Iredell-Statesville Schools is one of the 20 largest school districts in North Carolina. The district is located in Iredell County, which contains a blend of urban, suburban and rural communities.

Although most of Iredell-Statesville's 1,600 teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience, the district was searching for ways to better meet its adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals. The district's instructional administrators decided that the best approach was to eliminate variations in the quality and delivery of instruction among district teachers without sacrificing the creativity of any individual teacher.



### Solution

In 2006, under the leadership of then-superintendent, Dr. Terry K. Holliday, Iredell-Statesville partnered with Teachscape to create a program for instructional facilitators who provide job-embedded on-site coaching and support monitoring to every building in the district. Within the program, teachers participate in online and face-to-face professional learning communities that include multimedia and text-based information resources on High Yield Instructional Strategies, the program's primary focus.

Dr. Melanie Taylor took over as associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction in 2008. During the fall of 2009, she oversaw the addition of the video-based case studies, interactive learning exercises, and lesson resources in Teachscape's web-based platform, Teachscape XL. Teachers use the resources to address performance deficiencies identified by principals, and as support for collaboration within the schools' professional learning communities.

The program deployment was designed as a four-year rollout with professional development teams focusing on a different strategy each semester. Administrators, principals, assistant principals and instructional facilitators conduct classroom walkthroughs to observe strategy implementation, and Teachscape's content allows them to effectively look for critical practices. Afterward, the observational data is analyzed online in accordance with the district's Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. In the 2009-10 school year, the district introduced two international baccalaureate stand-alone middle school programs, as well as two early college programs. "We created customized Classroom Walkthrough tools to address the special requirements of our IB and early college programs," said Dr. Taylor.

At PLC meetings, members review specific strategies, implement those strategies in their classrooms and then bring feedback, reflections and student samples to the next meeting.



**We now have access to the Teachscape Professional Learning Suite. Our teachers are always looking for strategies and ideas, and they can put those content-specific resources to work very quickly."**

Dr. Melanie Taylor,  
Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction,  
Iredell-Statesville Schools

## Benefits

- Teachscape's nine categories of High Yield Instructional Strategies are based on research by renowned education expert Robert Marzano and his colleagues. In addition, the instructional studies resources were developed in partnership with educator institutions such as Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) and the American Federation of Teachers to further ensure content quality.
- The training content and resources are continually being updated and improved. Teachers can access the support materials and suggestions for lessons whenever it is convenient for them, and review the information as many times as they need to understand a topic or concept.
- Teachscape trains the instructional facilitators who are hired by the district as coach-trainers in order to ensure that educators have a resource for follow-up training issues on Teachscape's technology or methodologies. The system facilitates teacher accountability by recording which teachers access the online resources and how much time was spent on them.
- Teachers appreciate the online nature of Teachscape because it allows for anytime, anywhere learning instead of having to take training at the end of the day. They simply have a deadline for completing a module or training piece.



## Demographics

- Number of Schools: 35
- Number of Teachers: 1,600
- Number of Students: 21,300
- 41% Free and Reduced Lunch
- Annual growth of 200 students

## Program Results

The program yielded significant results even before its scheduled completion in the fall of 2011. Iredell-Statesville students' 2008-09 reading proficiency test scores rose from 63.7 percent to 74.9 percent although schools were adjusting to new reading standards adopted by the state in the previous year. In addition, before the state's renorming, the reading skills gap between African-American and white students had shrunk from 30.4 to 26.1 points for the 2008-09 school year; afterward it went from 29.2 to 18.6 points in one year.

Iredell-Statesville also recorded the following accomplishments:

- The district met 94 percent of its AYP targets (higher than the state and region averages).
- Students' 2008-09 state test scores exceeded state averages for both reading and math.
- The district reduced its dropout rate from 10 percent to less than three percent.
- Graduation rates for the 2008-09 school year rose to 80.9 percent, surpassing the state average of 71.7 percent.
- Suspensions and expulsions lessened in frequency, and the overall rate was below the state average.
- The Teacher Working Conditions survey revealed the district as above the state average on all domains.
- The district decreased the percentage of market share they were losing to private schools.
- Public opinion of the local public school system has greatly improved.

In addition to encouraging consistent high-quality instruction, the high-yield practices have gained teachers access to innovative ideas that they never would have imagined.

In 2008, the district received the coveted Malcolm Baldrige Award. The following year, Dr. Holliday received the title of North Carolina Superintendent of the Year.

Iredell-Statesville plans to use Teachscape's custom publishing component to create videos of its own teachers using high-yield strategies. "Our teachers like the real-life teachers in the video, but if they see their actual colleagues utilizing a strategy, it'll make it more real and attainable for them," said Dr. Taylor. Videotaping is scheduled to start in the fall of 2010, and the district plans to continue custom publishing even at the end of the four-year rollout. Additionally, Iredell-Statesville will continue to provide Teachscape's training tools to all new hires.