A Georgia District Orchestrates Three Levels of Interim Data Analysis

“Striking a Balance: Georgia District Adds Assessments and Transforms Classroom Practice” by Lissa Pijanowski in Journal of Staff Development, Fall 2008 (Vol. 29, #4, p. 43-46) Summarized in Marshall Memo 249

In this helpful Journal of Staff Development article, Lissa Pijanowski, associate superintendent in the Forsyth County Schools in Georgia, reports on her district’s impressive student-achievement gains, which she attributes to “focused, collegial conversations” about interim assessment results. Pijanowski says the key was organizing three levels of reflection on interim assessment results, with teacher leaders involved at every stage of the process:

• **Level 1: Individual teachers** – Classroom teachers look at their interim assessment item analyses and ask themselves these questions:
  - Which items did my students miss most frequently?
  - What standards was each of these items assessing?
  - How did my students’ results compare to school performance on each item?
  - Why did most of my students choose the incorrect responses they did?
  - What will I do now to reteach the most problematic missed standards?
  - Which individual students need additional help based on these results?

  “These questions lead teachers to delve deeply into the standards they teach and to reflect on their instructional practice in a low-risk environment,” says Pijanowski. “Teacher understanding of their own performance data must precede conversations within a professional learning community.”

• **Level 2: Grade-level or content teams** – Having done their individual reflections, teachers meet in same-grade or same-subject teams and ask these questions:
  - What are our team strengths based on these results?
  - What are our team challenges?
  - What factors in our curriculum and instruction do we feel influenced these results?
  - How can we collaboratively modify instruction and reteach standards that our students had the most difficulty learning?
  - How will we know if our students have mastered each standard?
  - What remediation and intervention will be most effective for individual students with low performance?
  - Is there additional professional development and learning support that we need as a team to help us achieve our goals for student learning?

  “The team sessions continued the learning of the individual teacher reflections,” says Pijanowski. “Teachers analyzed their results even more intensely and took actions they may not have otherwise considered in isolation.”

• **Level 3: Schoolwide dialogue** – Finally, school leaders got the whole staff together to focus on interim assessment results and other schoolwide data, answering these questions:
  - Do the results show we are making progress toward meeting our school improvement goals?
- How did we perform on the reading/English language arts and math target areas we identified for improvement this year?
- How did our subgroups and at-risk students perform?
- Are there strategies and actions in our school improvement plan that need to be modified based on these results?
- Are our remediation and intervention strategies closing the achievement gap?
- Do we need to modify our professional learning plan to provide additional support?
- What resources do we need to accomplish the curriculum and instructional changes we have identified?