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Coaching in Hays, Texas cracks the code to sustainability and spread

One of the continuing dilemmas in any school or district implementing SIM is how to sustain and spread quality implementation to other schools. Inevitably, schools enter what Michael Fullan calls the implementation dip, where fidelity and quality of implementation falter. Many times SIM Professional Developers not based within a school are tasked with trying to keep the literacy reform momentum going within that school. Cynthia Coburn states that for any innovative school improvement effort to work, it must shift from an externally controlled transformation to one where the focus is on the capacity of the organization to sustain implementation without outside support. That is the goal of the Hays Consolidated Independent School District (CISD) SIM/CLC implementation plan.

In 2013, Hays CISD in Central Texas working with the SIM team at Education Service Center Region 13 (Gina Alligood, Mary Black, Kim Watts, and Vicky Yarborough) developed a structured plan to spread SIM and CLC implementation from Simon Middle School to the other four middle schools in the district. As a part of the implementation plan, each summer Hays CISD sends teacher



leaders to the Region 13 SIM Potential Professional Developer Institute (PPDI) with the goal of having 3 certified Content Enhancement Professional Developers and 1 certified Learning Strategies Professional Developer at each middle school. In the four years of the district-wide SIM implementation, fourteen people have become certified SIM Professional Developers. In June of 2017, six more teachers, coaches, and an assistant principal attended PPDI's and are working to complete certification requirements.

District administration provides the resources necessary to build the capacity to ensure the sustainability of the execution of the plan in all six district middle schools. The SIM team at Region 13 works side by side with SIM coaches in each school to



Wallace Middle School SIM Coach Christy Henry partners with Barton Middle School principal Teri Eubank to play CLC trivia at the Hays District Literacy Leadership Team meeting.



Dahlstrom Middle School SIM Coach Cody Mize collaborates with two teachers at the District Literacy Leadership Team meeting.

provide SIM Professional Development and school-based coaching. The plan also provides for monthly coaching meetings that include both district administrators, Hays SIM coaches, and the Region 13 SIM team who together monitor progress of each school's CLC Action Plan created by site Literacy Leadership Teams and work toward the shift of ownership to District teachers, principals, and instructional coaches. In less than two years, the Region 13 SIM team will be involved only as a regional support.

Encouraging student data indicates that SIM *Content Enhancement Routines* and *Learning Strategies* are making a difference in student learning. One middle school's state assessment (STAAR) data indicated a 17 percentile increase in science and multiple student sub-populations increased passing rates. In all middle schools, students moved from Quantile 4 to Quantile 2, which shows they are being more successful on assessments.

Mary Black
SIM Project Manager
Austin, TX

"The close relationship between Hays SIM coaches and Region 13 Coaches has allowed the Hays coaches to be provided development opportunities through networking, partnership coaching, and facilitation of Dr. Knight's coaching principles and practices. The Region 13 coaches believe in impacting our future and strive for the group to be successful for our students to have success. Again, due to their commitment to student learning, our middle schools are equipped with SIM coaches at every campus. Thousands of students are receiving research validated routines that will help them long after their middle school years."

- Cody Mize, SIM coach at Dahlstrom Middle School,
Buda, TX

"As a teacher I can tell you that having a Region 13 SIM coach not only enhanced my comfort level with *Content Enhancement Routines*, but also the frequency with which they were utilized. As a SIM coach now, some things that make me feel wonderful and/or validated are when teachers tell me after a training or co-teaching that they feel more comfortable with a device (kind of their own aha moment). It especially is satisfying when they reflect on how a CER increased the level of questioning and rigor in a lesson. I think having Region XIII support per campus made a huge difference to me as a teacher and now as a SIM instructional coach"

-Kim Pena, SIM coach at McCormick Middle School,
Buda, TX