

Pasco County (FL) Preparing for K–5 Implementation in the Fall

After a successful pilot of Eureka Math, Pasco County (FL), will shift to district-wide implementation of the curriculum in Grades K–5 for the 2017–18 school year. Christine Bell (Senior Instructional Specialist, K–6 Mathematics) and Tracy Miller (K–2 Mathematics Curriculum Specialist) described why they made the switch and how they are getting teachers, administrators, coaches, and parents prepared.

49 schools
31,535 students
19,990 low-income
2,071 English learners
5,689 special education



Christine Bell

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED WITH EUREKA?

Christine: A couple of our schools started using it two years ago because the existing math resource was not meeting the standards and was outdated. Then we started a pilot in six of our low-performing turnaround schools where it really caught fire.

Students in these schools, who tend to be the highest-needs students in the district, were keeping up with or outperforming students in our top tier schools. Teachers had a much better understanding of what they were teaching. And through the conversations that students were having, we could see light bulbs going on. We wanted this for all students.



Tracy Miller

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO ADOPT DISTRICTWIDE IN GRADES K-5?

Tracy: We were seeing Eureka all over the place and so many of our teachers were already dabbling with it, so we decided to go all in. We conducted focus groups and night sessions — people wanted to go this way. Additionally, we used the Achieve EQulP rubric to analyze rigor and get feedback.

We also were seeing great work in schools. Students used to struggle with presentations and using language to explain math. It's now second nature, not just for some students, but for almost all of them.

Christine: Third graders are using words like “associative properties” to explain and justify their work. They can also model what they’re doing.

Tracy: Students are making the connections for themselves, connecting Modules 4 and 5 to Module 1, saying, “Oh yeah, I remember this.”

WHAT ARE SOME KEY STEPS YOU'RE TAKING TO SMOOTH THE TRANSITION?

Christine: We have been planning and conducting a lot of professional development that is differentiated for all teachers. Great Minds is conducting “Lead Eureka” sessions for all administrators. Math coaches are also participating in the “Understanding the Major Work of the Grade Band” session (grades K–2 and 3–5). During the summer, we’ll be training new teachers with “Modules Study” and “Focus on Fluency” PD sessions.

“Our highest-needs students were keeping up with or outperforming students in our top tier schools.”

— Christine Bell, Senior Instructional Specialist, K-6 Mathematics

A learning symposium will also provide four days of differentiated training where we've tapped some of our top teachers and coaches to be the training team. Additionally, the Eureka Fellows provided training for schools already implementing the curriculum and next fall, Great Minds will come in and lead PD sessions on "Preparation & Customization" and "Solving Word Problems" (K-2, 3-5).

Our specialists will provide regular support to our schools and our coaches will receive monthly training so that everyone will receive a consistent message. Plus, we are creating short informative videos on Facebook for teachers and parents to use.

Tracy: We'll also provide weekly podcasts on grade-specific models and strategies.

Christine: And we offer virtual module studies two weeks in advance of the lesson for anyone who wants to engage outside the Professional Learning Communities.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME KEY CHALLENGES AND HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Christine: The biggest challenge has been in grades 4 and 5, with students who haven't used Eureka before and need to learn the language and concepts. Next year, we're providing time and supports to preview the models and strategies. Teachers and students both need this before they can move forward.

Tracy: Pacing has also been a challenge. When students don't understand a concept, teachers are used to stopping and re-teaching, which puts them behind, so they started picking and choosing lessons. Teachers are now seeing that lessons build off each other and that you don't have to look for mastery right away. Teachers who have used the curriculum for a full year understand this, but it takes people time to wrap their heads around this new way. It's important to take enough time to plan. July is too late for a fall implementation because there are so many things to learn. We started planning last summer and fall, listening to teachers and students who were using it already.

"Teachers are now seeing that lessons build off each other and that you don't have to look for mastery right away."

— Tracy Miller

ARE YOU COLLABORATING WITH OTHER DISTRICTS AND HAS THAT HELPED?

Christine: We took a field trip to Duval County (which has been using Eureka since the 2015-2016 school year), which helped alleviate some stress. They told us to hold true to the program and that it gets easier. We regularly remind ourselves of those conversations. Also, TNTP and Student Achievement Partners have been helpful with our rollout. Pinellas County is another district that we've partnered with for training and resources.

Tracy: We just came back from a conference where a district from the Florida Panhandle is considering Eureka and wants to come visit us, so we're trying to pay it forward.

LISTEN to Pasco County educators describe their experience with *Eureka Math*.