BloomBoard and DCPS:
Empowering Teachers and Promoting Accountability

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

When the District of Columbia adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, school administrators scrambled to bring teachers up to speed so they could help their students meet the rigorous new benchmarks for math and English. Like many districts across the country, District of Columbia Public Schools quickly realized it wasn't prepared to implement Common Core.

By examining performance data, DCPS realized it was [struggling with teacher development](#). It wasn't that the district didn't have the resources for teacher education; the problem was that its resources were spread haphazardly across the district, with no way to connect educators with the tools they needed. Teachers, who were already stretched thin trying to raise test scores, felt overwhelmed by professional development.

Another problem was that the district had no system in place to follow up with teachers and provide feedback. DCPS knew it needed to take a personalized approach to professional development by offering teachers plenty of choices, but it also needed a way for teachers to track their development efforts to promote accountability.

DCPS' Pilot Program to Accelerate Professional Development

In an innovative approach to professional development, the district launched a pilot program with 10 schools and enlisted the help of BloomBoard to create a way to manage professional development and collect participation data.

The goal of the pilot program wasn't to evaluate teachers' performance; rather, it was to provide support by understanding which professional development offerings teachers were interested in, working with the teachers on those development efforts, and tracking participation.

Teachers participating in the program benefitted from:

Personalization

Before the project began, the district used generic forms and systems for teachers across all schools in the district. To minimize confusion when collecting data, BloomBoard customized these templates based on each school's professional development offerings so the district would know which schools were associated with each piece of data.

Visualization

BloomBoard's online platform is highly visual. It allows educators to track their progress and access notes from their previous courses. Tracking teacher participation in professional development programs was one of the district's goals for working with BloomBoard; as it turned out, the teachers also loved being able to see their progress and plan their next steps.

Accountability

Being able to collect data on engagement is critical for any professional development initiative. Not only does this reveal helpful trends on a district-wide level, but measuring participation and having a built-in system for follow-ups also helps hold teachers accountable.

> "With BloomBoard's help, we've been able to change the culture in our pilot schools to one that's more focused on professional development and improvement."
>
> **Paige Hoffman**
> Coordinator, Teacher Development Strategy, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

Using BloomBoard to implement a system to track teachers' professional development did more than give the district a way to measure educators' progress and fast-track preparation for Common Core. It has fundamentally changed the tone of professional development in the district.

KEY TAKEAWAY

This is a big win for educators and an even bigger win for students. When teachers feel empowered to learn, they're in a better position to empower their students. And with an atmosphere of accountability, teachers are more likely to continue their professional development journey and improve year after year.

Learn how BloomBoard can support your organization's professional development goals.
Visit schools.bloomboard.com or call (650) 567-5656 to get started.