



## Creating a Shared Vision for Personalized Competency-based Learning



“Micro-credentials are a great resource for our district. In addition to creating an environment of continuous professional learning, they’ve allowed us to provide our educators with choice in their PD while compensating individuals for their professional growth.”

Kristie Martorelli  
Professional Learning Coordinator  
Dysart Unified School District

### Introduction

The mission of Dysart Unified School District’s (DUSD) professional development department is to support and enhance the individual development of all Dysart stakeholders to ensure that every student graduates college and career ready. As part of this mission, they have a vision to provide personalized learning to all students, staff members, and teachers.

Currently, the district provides a number of opportunities ranging from essential training to peer mentoring and full day learning summits. To further complement these offerings, the district set out to provide educators with more personalized learning experiences that would allow them to explore their passions while providing opportunities to move up the salary schedule, thus increasing teacher satisfaction and retention.

### Solution

DUSD worked with BloomBoard to create a custom professional learning program called Dysart U which was designed to increase teacher retention by providing compensation incentives all while supporting their vision for personalized learning. This program leverages micro-credentials to enable participants to move towards and beyond the Master’s level on the salary schedule by demonstrating specific competencies.

There are two phases to the program:

1. Phase one consists of 15 micro-credentials focused on competencies related to implementing personalized learning for students, including collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity, technology integration, growth mindset, personalized learning, and flexible grouping.
2. Phase two also consists of 15 micro-credentials; however, participants are able to design their own path by selecting micro-credentials based on areas of interest and career goals.

## Solution (Cont.)

Key benefits of the program include:

- **Incentives:** Participants will earn a 4% raise after successful completion of first 15 micro-credentials and another 4% after the second 15 micro-credentials are earned. This is a total of an 8% raise after successful completion of the entire program.
- **Ongoing enrollment:** There is no start and end date, educators can work at their own pace. Participants are required to earn a minimum of 5 micro-credentials each year in order to stay in the program.
- **No financial requirements:** There are no added financial requirements for educators who earn advanced credit through the Dysart U program (versus an outside University) and each increase equates to a professional growth step on the district's salary schedule.
- **Support:** A face-to-face kick-off workshop is held at the beginning of each school year to help new participants get started. Returning participants are invited to ask questions, provide feedback, and share advice on how to be successful. Ongoing support is also provided through a BloomBoard facilitator who will check-in with participants, keep them motivated, answer questions, and provide feedback throughout the program.

## Impact

Launched in March 2017, 90 participants from across the district have enrolled and are earning a “Master’s Degree” (recognized by DUSD only) via micro-credentials. Of these participants, about 60 percent have earned at least one micro-credentials and three educators have completed Phase 1 by earning their first 15 micro-credentials.

“This program is HIGHLY BENEFICIAL for anyone who participates and was lots of fun to show my students work and reflect on my own teaching. It does a wonderful job just as National Board certification does of making you grow as a teacher. I would highly recommend this to any teacher!”

Melynda Martin, SPED Teacher, Countryside Elementary

## Looking Forward

As the pilot progresses DUSD plans to invite more educators to participate in the program. Year one of the Dysart U program began with 60 educators, year two included 90 educators, and the plan for year three will be to include 120 educators.

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