

Unicorn District Background:

- 20 schools
- Primary K-2 ELA curriculum: Core Knowledge (2nd year of implementation)
- Primary 3-12 ELA curriculum: Guidebooks 2.0 (1st year of implementation)
- Primary K-12 math curriculum: Eureka (2nd year of implementation)
- TAP in some schools

Unicorn District is committed to providing professional development for all teachers in the district. Accordingly, they have quarterly district-wide PD days but currently do not have a scope and sequence for how that time will be used across the school year. About six weeks before each PD day, the head of professional development for Unicorn District looks at data from the district benchmark assessments and reaches out to a handful of principals to determine the specific skills with which students are struggling the most. She then reaches out to a variety of people to ask them to join their upcoming PD day such as:

- Consultants who received positive reviews from neighboring districts
- Teachers within the district who have demonstrated proficiency in particular instructional strategies
- LDOE Network staff
- Vendors who reached out to her to offer their services
- Professors from the nearby university

Here are a few examples of the types of PD Unicorn District has provided it's teachers:

- In September, Unicorn District brought in a consultant to support schools in determining the level of [rigor and relevance](#) in each classroom across the district. The consultant evaluated the all 20 schools and shared his findings with districts and principals in a report. Principals also received training on a teacher evaluation rubric based on the rigor and relevance frameworks. (cost: \$200,000)
- Last month's PD day provided teachers with the option of attending four different 80-minute workshops led by district Teacher Leaders and a couple of professors from the local university. (cost \$5,000). Sample sessions:
 - *Building Students' Confidence in Writing*
 - Get students excited about writing about real-world ideas!
 - Introduce topics (e.g., "Write about a time you had an adventure" or "Pick a favorite text and explain why it is your favorite") for students using writing menus and use graphic organizers to brainstorm ideas.
 - Teach students to write narratives about real or imagined experiences or events and publish their writing online using an application.
 - *Improving Student Writing through Journaling*
 - Offer interest and ideas on how to effectively use journaling as means of fostering student choice, communication, and classroom management.
 - Provide an instructional writing strategy, known as "4-Square Writing" that will improve all student responses to open-ended prompts in all subject areas.
 - Show participants how to create rubrics focusing on rigor and relevance to analyze how well students are making connections to their everyday lives when writing.
 - *Sparkling Student Engagement*
 - Analyze the importance of knowing the needs of your students.

- Implement teaching strategies designed to provide differentiated instruction for every learning style.
 - Make real-world connections for students through metaphors and analogies.
 - Explain how interactive facilitation of student learning provides opportunities for student skill growth and leadership development.
- *The SOLVE Method*
 - Teachers will learn the SOLVE technique to assist students' in solving word problems. Teachers will create their own Math word problems and/or Math Tasks.
 - Teachers will examine student writing samples to view how the SOLVE method assisted students in creating a math writing using modeling and reasoning in their writing.
- Next month, a group of 15 district leaders, principals, and teacher leaders will attend a two-day training at the [Ron Clark Academy](#). The goal of the visit is to learn about the school's culture development. (cost: \$18,000)
- Unicorn district always sends some teachers to the Teacher Leader Summit and the Collaborations. Sometimes Teacher Leaders redeliver those sessions in their schools or at district trainings, but there currently aren't systems in place to monitor compliance with or quality of the redelivery (cost: \$800-\$2000).