

# Supporting a Shift to Student-Driven Instruction



**ASH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Mid-Atlantic U.S. | 7,500 Students | One Site Lead + One Trainer

## Background

Ash is a public school district in the Mid-Atlantic region serving approximately 7,500 students across 14 schools. One trainer and one site lead participated in SETTT for Success. The trainer serves as a special education teacher specialist and behavior specialist for the district.

The district joined SETTT for Success to strengthen teacher use of instructional data and improve instructional decision-making. Early goals focused on building teacher competence in using informal assessment, adjusting instruction when strategies were not effective, and shifting from preference-based teaching to a more student-driven, consistent approach across grade levels.

Students are served across a range of settings, including inclusive classrooms and a regional Program for Academic and Community Success (PACS), which provides specialized support across elementary, middle, and high school levels.

## Opportunities and Challenges

The trainer identified a key challenge in teachers' ability to use student data to inform instruction. Based on prior discussions and survey results, many teachers struggled to determine where students were in their learning and how to analyze and interpret data to guide instructional decisions.

In addition, the loss of dedicated professional development (PD) time due to inclement weather and competing priorities limited opportunities for group learning and made it difficult to sustain consistent, shared PD experiences.

## Trainer Accomplishments

The trainer used classroom observations and teacher interviews to better understand how teachers were applying data in practice and to identify areas for targeted support. The trainer also delivered one PD cycle with multiple sessions focused on unpacking Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) Essential Elements, including their key components, and using mini-maps and instructionally embedded assessments to inform instructional decisions.

### Support for Trainers

- Used the self-evaluation tool to identify focus areas for the next PD cycle (e.g., long-term planning in the design phase)
- Served as a thought partner across PD cycle phases, particularly for post-PD data interpretation and identifying next steps
- Reviewed PD materials prior to delivery, as requested

In subsequent cycles, the trainer and site lead conducted individualized classroom walkthroughs. While some teachers focused first on strengthening classroom environment and routines, most worked to improve instructional decision-making. Walkthroughs were framed as collaborative conversations rather than evaluations. Following each walkthrough, the trainer and site lead worked with teachers to identify immediate next steps for growth.

## Results

The trainer reported increased use of assessment data to inform instructional decision-making, along with greater individualization and variation in task complexity across classrooms. Some teachers also began to establish more consistent instructional routines.

Teachers demonstrated increased effort and engagement in applying what they had learned, which the trainer noted during classroom observations.