

Using Assessment Data to Inform Stronger Instruction



POPLAR SCHOOL

Non-Public | 75 Students | Two Site Leads + Four Trainers

Background

Poplar School is a non-public school that serves students with autism and autism spectrum disorders. The non-public school serves about 75 Pre-K-12 students in a non-residential school setting. Poplar joined SETTT for Success to strengthen in-person professional development (PD) and improve student learning outcomes.

Two site leads and four trainers participated. Trainers served dual roles as classroom teachers and instructional specialists with coaching responsibilities.

Opportunities and Challenges

The trainers and site leads faced two specific challenges as they joined SETTT for Success. Poplar teachers were not consistently using student assessment data to inform instruction, and expectations for effective teaching and learning varied between elementary and upper grade level teachers.

There were, however, established practices that provided opportunities for the coaches and trainers. The district had established dedicated PD time and site leads were actively engaged from the outset. Site leads also provided accountability and made it clear to trainers that they expected a high quality of PD.

Trainer Accomplishments

Site leads and trainers analyzed student data and gathered teacher input through PD preference surveys. Using these insights alongside high-quality instructional resources, the team applied the SETTT for Success cycle to design PD responsive to teacher needs and specifically focused on improving student outcomes.

Support for Trainers

- Guided use of student data and teacher feedback to inform PD planning
- Supported application of the SETTT for Success cycle to design responsive PD
- Provided feedback on PD sessions and supported refinement across cycles
- Supported development of observation “look-fors” to guide classroom feedback
- Reinforced alignment between PD goals, instructional strategies, and student outcomes

Trainers designed and delivered three PD sessions. The first two sessions focused on building teacher understanding of student data and introduced shared reading as a strategy to address identified learning gaps.

Using feedback from post-PD surveys and classroom observations, trainers revised the third session, focusing on effectively integrating communication devices into shared reading.

Results

Trainers reported increased confidence in accessing and using Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) student data and resources, planning and delivering PD, and supporting both literacy instruction and student communication. They also noted greater confidence in their roles as teacher leaders and credited the SETTT for Success approach with enabling more impactful PD.

Teachers became more receptive to classroom observations and ongoing trainer support as they refined the shared reading strategy. Trainers reported that shared reading increased student engagement and supported student thinking through communication during instruction. Many teachers plan to continue using these strategies.

Trainers and site leads noted strong positive reactions to both the process and outcomes. Clearly defined “look-fors” focused classroom observations and reinforced effective instructional practices. Site leads also reported that students were able to sustain attention to text for longer periods.