

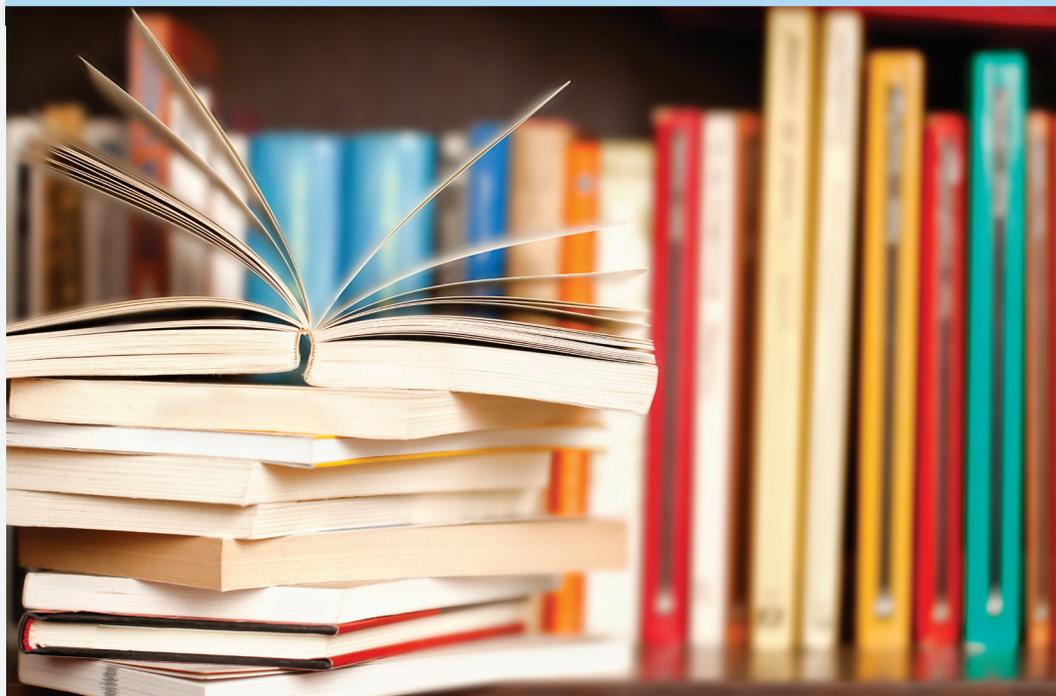


PLC AT WORK™

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Hortonville Area School District
OUTAGAMIE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

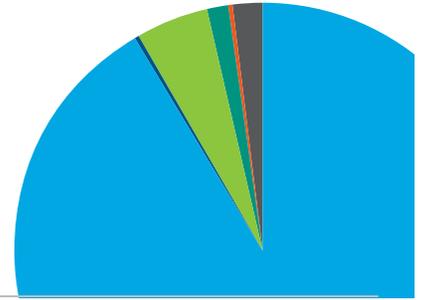
Book Study Programs



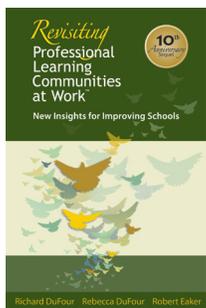
DEMOGRAPHICS

- 3,712 students
- 460 staff
- 14% Free and reduced lunch
- 12.4% Special education
- 2% Limited English proficient

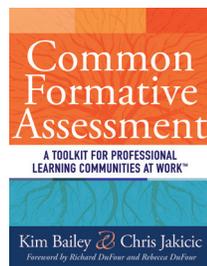
- Caucasian: 91.6%
- African American: 0.3%
- Hispanic: 4.7%
- Asian: 1.3%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 0.3%
- Multiracial: 1.8%



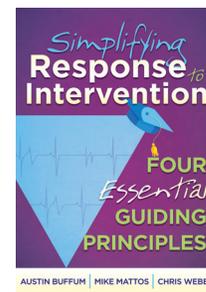
BOOKS STUDIED



BOOK STUDY #1
2012–2013
Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work: New Insights for Improving Schools
By Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, and Robert Eaker



BOOK STUDY #2
2013–2014
Common Formative Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Learning Communities at Work™
By Kim Bailey and Chris Jakicic



BOOK STUDY #3
2014–2015
Simplifying Response to Intervention: Four Essential Guiding Principles
By Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Chris Weber

DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE BOOK STUDY PROGRAM

Hortonville Area School District (HASD) established a clear set of goals it wanted to achieve, including:

- Designing a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Building and sustaining professional learning communities (PLCs).
- Developing a system of interventions that support children with diverse learning needs.
- Implementing effective grading practices and providing meaningful feedback to students.

In order to reach these goals, leadership began a districtwide book study program that involved administrators, principals, teachers, speech and language pathologists, and school psychologists.

“I cannot imagine not having literature to support the important work we are doing as a staff,” said Todd Timm, principal of Hortonville High School. “I believe professional knowledge and development is a necessity for continued growth, and a book study is an important component of that work.”

When selecting books, HASD researched their options and chose strategically based on their priorities. District leaders decided to first have staff learn about professional learning communities (PLCs), and then explore how to create and use formative assessments within the PLC process. Next, they focused on how to use formative assessment data to intervene with students needing greater intervention and supports.

Shawn Gartzke, a second-grade teacher at North Greenville Elementary School, called the order in which the book studies took place “vitally important” to HASD’s success at implementing change. “Each book built logically and methodically on the previous books,” he explained. “It is the combination of the ideas and themes that helped to make gains and improvements in our district.”

In order to ensure teams thoroughly studied the book content, HASD required staff members to take a midyear formative assessment on their learning. “It made the book study a true reality and emphasized the importance of team learning and reflection,” shared Lisa Borowski, an elementary math coach/math interventionist.



“I would most definitely recommend a book study to other schools and districts!”

—Shawn Gartzke, second-grade teacher

“The book studies provided the necessary professional knowledge for staff members to engage in a cultural shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning ...that is powerful!”

—Todd Timm, principal

IMPROVING TEACHING & LEARNING TOGETHER

HASD’s book studies played an integral role in the successful creation of a districtwide common language. Developing this language gave teams the ability to engage in difficult, important conversations that ultimately led to significant improvements.

“Our book studies have allowed for meaningful and focused conversations among all stakeholders—teachers and administration, across buildings and grade levels,” said Gartzke.

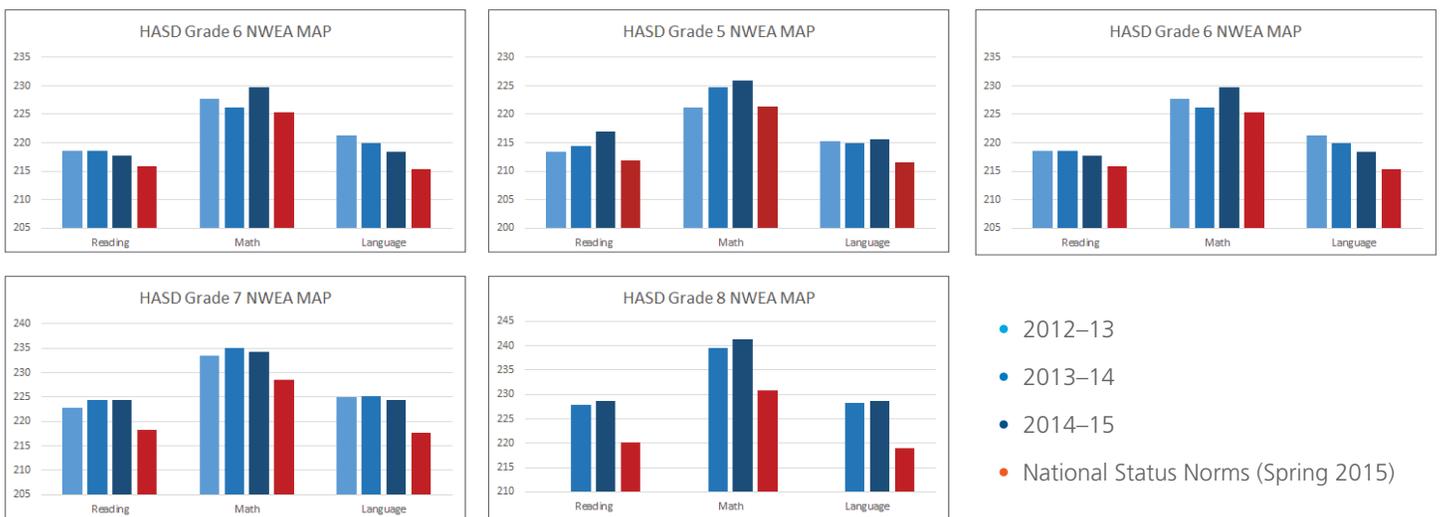
David Harris, principal of Greenville Elementary, agreed, sharing that team meetings, building staff meetings, and district-level meetings have become more effective. “We now share the same language and understanding of the collaborative process of identifying what children need to know, identifying how we will assess the standards, how we will address struggling learners, and how we will extend lessons for those that already know the material,” he explained.

HASD relied on book studies to not only help get teams on the same page and make initial improvements, but also to empower them to be innovative and strive to continually advance processes going forward.

“Many changes occurred in our structure—some were more painful than others,” Borowski revealed. “But our students started receiving systematic opportunities to learn what they didn’t know, and they had time built into their day to make this needed understanding of concepts become a reality.”

Deirdre Floros, a speech-language pathologist at North Greenville Elementary School, added, “In order to be a community of professional learners, there must be a dedication to continual study and improvement. These book studies helped to provide the framework from which our team relentlessly engages in reexamining and enhancing our practices.”

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE RESULTS



- 2012–13
- 2013–14
- 2014–15
- National Status Norms (Spring 2015)

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