

## Case Study

### Principal Background

Principal Martina Larkin is about to enter her second year as principal at Baldwin Elementary School. Martina has 10 years of teaching experience in the district, including 5 years at the school where she is currently principal. Teachers at her school respect her as a highly effective primary teacher, particularly in early literacy instruction. The Instructional Leadership Team (made up of one teacher per grade level) at her school has been in place for the last two years. This year there are 2 new team members. The Instructional Leadership Team (made up of one teacher per grade level) at her school has been in place for the last two years. This year there are 2 new team members.

Baldwin has a 500-student population, with three classrooms in each primary grade and two classrooms for grades 4 and 5. Most grade level teams are accustomed to working together and have developed a habit of meeting regularly to plan their lessons.

The most recent test scores for the school are the following:

- 30% of students in all grades, on average, pass the math test
  - 5th grade currently has the lowest math scores (20% passing)
  - 3rd grade is also a struggling grade level (22% passing)
  - Highest scores are in computation
  - Lowest scores are in problem solving and number sense, particularly at 5<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Math instruction is primarily whole group
- 50% of the students in all grades, on average, pass the reading and writing test
  - 4th grade currently has the lowest reading scores (45% passing)
  - The 2nd grade team this year has a grade level goal of all students reading at or above grade level by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
  - Overall, 30% of students are passing the benchmark assessments

The school has the following structures for professional learning and collaboration currently:

- Grade level teams meet weekly for 45 mins (facilitated by grade level leads),
- Grade level leads have one extra planning period a week release time to support colleagues (the leads use the time in different ways and are flexible about this),
- Access to the district math specialists to lead trainings or provide coaching at the school up to 2 days a month.

## TASK

Let's assume that Martina and her ILT decided that they are going to focus math learning on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade this year. The teachers share that they are excited to learn more about how to improve student learning in math.

- What would you do immediately Martina's place?
- What would you recommend that Martina do next with her ILT in order to get a better understanding of the specific professional development needs in math and to start to set specific goals for grades 2 and 5 for the year?
- If there was a professional learning opportunity with the district math leaders on the calendar in the next two-three weeks (focused on second and fifth grade), what would you recommend Martina say in order to clearly open the session? What would you recommend she pay attention to during the sessions and then emphasize during a close?
- Finally, how would you propose Martina start to think through (with her team) the purposes of the different professional learning structures for teachers (particularly 2nd and 5th grade teachers)?