



Making Middle School Math Accessible

Kentucky is determined to improve mathematics proficiency for all students at all levels. The students who are most at-risk in achieving proficiency, which includes those with disabilities, are of particular concern and importance for moving Kentucky forward. Less than 30% of middle grades students in the at-risk population achieved mathematics proficiency compared to 41% of all middle grades students' mathematics achievement according to 2012 KPREP results.

In order to close the achievement gap, the KCM has partnered with EDC (Education Development Center, Inc.), a global non-profit organization with funding from the National Science Foundation, to offer a professional development course specifically for middle grades mathematics and special education teachers.

The 2012-13 course, Improving Mathematics Learning for Students with Disabilities: Algebraic Thinking, Expressions and Equations, was designed by EDC and facilitated by KCM to empower teachers to apply practical strategies with their students while enacting the school's core mathematics curriculum. This course nurtures the collaboration and sharing of expertise across disciplines (mathematics and special education) in order to support teachers to meet students' needs in making mathematics more accessible while maintaining the integrity and rigor of the mathematics.

During 2012-13, over 50 Kentucky teachers from 11 counties participated in one of three cohorts, each receiving three days of training spread across three months in order to provide for practical applications of the learning between sessions. Participants shared how this course was targeted to meet their specific needs and included high quality tools and practices to support their teaching and efficacy (see comments at right).



Pictured left, KCM Regional Coordinator, Linda Montgomery, works with middle school teachers at a session held recently in Lexington, Kentucky.

The KCM will provide additional offerings with new cohorts for this upcoming academic year. For more details, see the [informational flyer](#).

Participating teachers shared their overwhelming appreciation for the course:

"I learned more in the three days (of this course) than in 30 course hours of a Secondary Ed. Master's program on how to teach."

"I now feel more confident in my ability to provide alternatives for my at-risk students."

"I learned so much more than I've learned in most other PDs I've attended."

"I've been frustrated for years trying to reach the students without IEP's (Individual Education Plans) that don't 'get it' with traditional teaching methods. This model gives me much needed tools and ideas to make math learning a realistic goal for a lot of students."

"The strategies and approaches introduced were often new to me, and opened my eyes to an entirely new way of teaching some concepts I had been mundanely teaching in the past with little success. I instantly used many of these techniques in my intervention classes and the co-taught class I share with a special educator."