

Teaching Strategies Gold Adoption Process

Grassroots discussion:

Incident to involvement with the preschool expansion grant, RSU 12 formed a professional learning community of educators from grades preK and kindergarten to discuss how to best support the transition of learners from preK to kindergarten classrooms. Very quickly, the teachers identified as a focus area the desire to create an assessment plan in order to improve our ability to have meaningful conversations about learners and their learning and identify those in need of interventions as early and as effectively as possible. As part of this work, we reviewed the existing assessments that were being used at the preK and kindergarten levels. After this review, kindergarten teachers expressed interest in learning more about the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) assessment being used in preK classrooms. They were impressed with its comprehensive focus. Specifically, they like that the assessment was not limited to Math and Reading but included in addition areas of physical and socio-emotional development and more. They also liked that the assessment was grounded in observation. This means that teachers assess based on observations made during regular instruction, and students are not pulled out for separate testing. As a result of this group's review, several things occurred:

- This group recommended adoption of the TSG assessment in kindergarten in lieu of the NWEA.
- This group gathered feedback from their colleagues in other kindergarten classrooms in the district about their recommendation, which led to the addition of some supports for this change.
- The administrative team considered the recommendation with the supports suggested and agreed that it made sense in light of our larger assessment plan.
- The curriculum committee of the RSU 12 board was apprised of this ongoing investigation into this assessment.

State mandate:

Meanwhile, parallel to these conversations, the Maine Department of Education determined that all districts participating in the preschool expansion grant would be required to administer a kindergarten entry assessment, and the MDOE determined that the assessment would be the TSG. This decision had the following effects:

- It supported the recommendation of the teachers
- It included grant funds to support the purchase of the TSG license
- It included a 2-day training for kindergarten teachers on how to use the assessment platform.