

# Every Classroom, Every Day

## Building Instructional Repertoire to Improve Student Achievement

### Why Do We Need *Every Classroom, Every Day*?

Districts across the country are working toward the common goal of graduating more of their students with the skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education or high quality employment. To reach this goal, schools are struggling to achieve sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in every classroom – a challenge intensified by increasingly diverse populations of learners and large numbers of young people who enter high school with literacy and math skills well below grade level.

### What Is It?

*Every Classroom, Every Day* provides intensive instructional supports to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English and Math teachers and their instructional supervisors and coaches to help them meet the challenge just described. This project expands the repertoire of instructional staff with:

- specific pedagogical strategies shown to promote mastery of rigorous academic content by diverse learners with varying skill sets;
- engaging and rigorous curricula to support students' literacy skills and benchmarking techniques to support students' numeracy skills;
- new forms of assessment both of student learning and of teaching quality in math and language arts; and
- new ways for instructional staff to use these assessments to drive improvement in teaching and learning.

These instructional supports have been associated with improved student achievement in high schools serving diverse student populations in districts across the nation.

In addition to these instructional improvement activities, the project includes a groundbreaking randomized trial evaluation conducted by an independent consortium of university researchers. Funds to support both the implementation of *Every Classroom, Every Day* and its evaluation come from a competitive grant awarded to the University of Rochester by the Institute of Education Sciences within the US Department of Education.

### Who Will Take Part?

- Up to 20 non-selective high schools each serving a minimum of 220 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and having a significant proportion of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.
- The Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE), a not-for-profit organization that has spent over a decade partnering with schools and districts to implement the comprehensive reform framework First Things First. IRRE will manage the initiative and provide technical assistance.
- A consortium of internationally renowned researchers from multiple universities.

## What Are the Project Activities?

During the two-year project, the following activities will occur annually (except where noted):

- **Four professional development (PD) days** for participating faculty focused on training in active engagement strategies, curriculum mapping and common assessments. Two of these days occur immediately before the opening of school and two are distributed throughout the school year.
- **Four one-day leadership trainings** to build the capacity of district and building instructional leaders to support teachers' implementation of new learning from the project. During the first year, instructional leaders will learn to use the Measuring What Matters (MWM) classroom visit protocol, a PDA-based instrument used to assess the level of Engagement, Alignment and Rigor (EAR) in the teaching and learning process. Instructional leaders will also learn how to access and use reports from these visits to support instructional decision-making. In the second year, there will be an orientation and training for new instructional leaders.
- **Two one-day trainings for instructional coaches in literacy and math** who will provide professional development supports to participating teachers. Districts will be asked to support these coaches' half-time work on this project as described in the costs section below.
- **Four three-day instructional site visits** by IRRE instructional experts. Two days of each visit will be spent working with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Math and English teachers one-on-one and in small groups. IRRE instructional staff will provide content and pedagogical supports for teachers using the literacy curriculum and math benchmarking as well as follow up work on curriculum mapping and common assessments. The third day of each site visit will be spent with instructional supervisors and coaches continuing to build their capacity to support the instructional improvement work.
- **Twice monthly two-hour teleconferences** with coaches and each building's lead instructional supervisor will be used to support their real-time coaching work with teachers, talk through emerging issues and help maintain project momentum.

## The Research

The research will evaluate whether and how the instructional supports provided by *Every Classroom, Every Day* influence key student outcomes, such as academic performance and graduation, and the quality of teaching and learning. IRRE will work with the research team to ensure that data collection through surveys, classroom observations and student records takes place with minimum disruption to schools and that participant confidentiality is maintained. Data from the research will be provided in a timely fashion to participating schools and districts over the course of the project.

## The Results

*Every Classroom, Every Day* combines a set of instructional supports representing the best of what IRRE has learned over the past decade about how to support improvements in teaching and learning. Schools that have used earlier versions and specific elements of this support package have demonstrated impressive gains in literacy and math scores as described in more detailed materials available upon request.

## Costs

- At no cost, at least two schools in each participating district will receive two years of training, on-site supports and technical assistance from the IRRE instructional team along with curricular materials and technology supports beginning Summer 2009.
- Participating schools and districts must make a two-year commitment to project implementation. For both years, the district/schools will need to cover costs of:
  - Participating teachers for the four professional development days (where existing PD days are not available and teacher contracts and agreements so stipulate);
  - Substitutes for four half-day trainings for participating teachers during the school year as part of the project's four site visits;
  - PDA devices for at least one district-level and five building-level instructional leaders per school;
  - One half- to full-time coach for literacy and one for math for the two years; and
  - Facilities and food for instructional leader and coach trainings and project site visits (as well as substitutes for teacher leaders participating in these activities).
  - The literacy curriculum needs an additional period of instruction beyond the typical allocation for required English courses in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. This could require a reallocation of staff to reflect this intensified focus on building students' literacy skills.
- A grant to the University of Rochester from the US Department of Education will cover all research costs and the costs of IRRE staff providing technical assistance to participating schools and districts.

## Timeline and Research Design

In the next several weeks, IRRE will be contacting and visiting districts and schools to provide opportunities for all interested sites to assess the goodness of fit between their needs and this initiative's goals and available supports. In the late Autumn of 2008, IRRE will select the first cohort of districts for participation in *Every Classroom, Every Day* which will begin in Summer 2009.

Within each participating district in the first cohort, all of the interested and qualified schools will enter a lottery where half of the schools will be selected to begin instructional supports in Summer 2009 and continue throughout the 2010-2011 academic year. Schools not selected in the lottery will participate in the research activities, continue to receive the instructional supports currently provided by the district and receive an honorarium of \$10,000 for their participation in the research.

This process will be repeated one year later when a second cohort of districts and schools will be selected and the lottery process enacted. Schools in both cohorts who do not receive instructional support as part of the *Every Classroom, Every Day* initiative have the option of receiving these supports after two years from district staff who have been trained through the project activities, by engaging IRRE directly, or both.

## For More Information

Contact the *Every Classroom, Every Day* project director, Dr. Diane Early (406-570-2037; [dianeearly@irre.org](mailto:dianeearly@irre.org)).