

# REAL WORLD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE



**SUPERINTENDENT  
ERIC SOBOTTA**

Reardon-Edwall School District  
Reardon, WA



**District Enrollment  
746**

**Grades Served  
K-12**

**Students of Color Enrolled  
7%**

**Economically  
Disadvantaged  
31.2%**

**T**aking the helm of Reardon-Edwall School District as a new Superintendent, Eric Sobotta knew it would bring growth opportunities. It's a big part of what attracted him to the role. But he now faced the twin challenges of finding high quality PD tailored to his new role and building a network of trusted colleagues.

***"I was looking for something that would connect me to the expertise of my colleagues. I was beginning to think it didn't exist."***

## THE PROBLEM

Sobotta needed solutions for thorny issues impacting the people in his care, but it felt like he was starting from scratch. Using data findings from CEE's EES Suite, two focal points were identified: (1) A gap in relational trust among staff, and (2) a lack of opportunities for students to experience a sense of belonging.

To increase Sobotta's access to colleagues and actionable solutions, Erich Bolz (CEE's VP of District Engagement) recommended a powerful PD format, 'Masterminds.'

## CONNECTING THROUGH MASTERMINDS

After each Mastermind session, Sobotta appreciated receiving a recap of the discussion, solutions shared, and additional links to best practices and research to consider. He summarized, "We've all gone through different scenarios. We all have something to offer. Our experiences are different, but themes like 'amplifying student voice' and 'how to increase relational trust among staff' are more common than you think."

***"It surprised me to learn that even accomplished superintendents, whom I respect and admire, shared their challenges and invited colleagues of any tenure to share potential solutions."***

## REAL BENEFITS

Sobotta noticed that he started comparing other forms of professional development to his experience with Masterminds.

***"Masterminds set the bar high with ROI, convenience, and collaboration designed in." He added, "In this role, you're keenly aware of the ROI of virtually everything. This includes the time I spend on my own learning."***

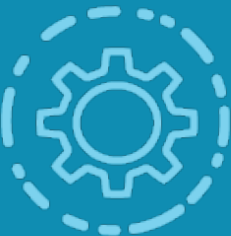
TOOLS AND SUPPORTS  
USED



Masterminds



Educational Effectiveness  
Surveys™ (EES)



Professional  
Development

REAL, STRATEGIC PD

To combat the isolation that comes with a superintendency, Sobotta has enrolled in consecutive Masterminds resulting in a Masterminds network.

***“I feel like growth happens with networking, and this format lends itself to real conversation. We’re saying ‘Hey, this is something I’m dealing with’ and we talk about real things deeply within a circle of trust.”***

Insights between Sobotta’s district culture data and what he saw on daily basis also strengthened. “I’m thinking through the different problems of practice’ we’ve worked on and the value of having quantitative culture data to look at. The overlap between Masterminds, the CEE data, and where I focus my efforts has made a world of difference.”

“Meetings and trainings have their place, but I really appreciate Masterminds isn’t a “sit and git PD” format. And so, if we can do this in a 90-minute chunk with a high return on investment - it’s the BEST PD I’ve ever had. I grow every time we meet.”

***“It’s the BEST PD I’ve ever had. I grow every time we meet.”***

-Superintendent Eric Sobotta

**Let’s Connect!**



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