

FINDING PD THAT FITS



**PRINCIPAL
ANGELA BALDUS**
Royal Intermediate School
Royal City, WA



District Enrollment
1,751

School Population
418

Grades Served
4-6

Students of Color Enrolled
82%

**Economically
Disadvantaged**
77%

Pincipal Angela Baldus had grown tired of spending days at a time traveling to professional development conferences determined to improve herself as an educational leader only to experience hit-or-miss workshops that didn't deliver on the promise of their titles, or useful information that wouldn't emerge until the final minutes of a 90-minute breakout session.

She'd strike up conversations on breaks with other educators, hoping to make connections and expand her professional network but, with such limited time, the resulting relationships often felt superficial. "When you go to canned professional development, often these people don't even know where Royal City is, or Central Washington, for that matter. They think we all live in Seattle," says Baldus.

Plus, conferences are expensive - both in terms of her available PD dollars and in terms of her own time and energy. Baldus needed a solution more tailored to her specific needs, one that wouldn't break the bank or disrupt her busy schedule all while helping her expand that vital network of colleagues she was seeking. "When you're in these small rural districts," she points out, "... you have to keep finding people that can help you solve your problems."

MEETING OF THE MASTERMINDS

Baldus, who was already using CEE's Educational Effectiveness Surveys (EES) to build her school culture, brought up the issue with Eric Price from CEE's executive coaching team. "Sometimes you feel crazy when you're out on a proverbial 'island' and feel like you don't have the resources you need," she told him.

Price immediately suggested a relatively new CEE offering called **CEE Masterminds: Your Community of Practice** - a monthly online session that brings together school leaders from different districts to share best practices and brainstorm in a joint effort to help one another solve their most pressing current issues.

**"Masterminds
is the one
'meeting'
I look forward
to each month."**

TOOLS AND SUPPORTS USED



Masterminds



Educational Effectiveness
Surveys™ (EES)



Leadership Coaching

“To me, (Masterminds) should be something that every educator knows about.”

- Principal Angela Baldus

Because the commitment would only amount to 90 minutes a month, plus the fact that she could participate from anywhere she could hop on a Zoom link, Baldus agreed to give it a try.

“I didn’t actually know what I was getting myself into,” she says. “And then I was hooked!”

CUSTOMIZED PD WITH A BUILT-IN NETWORK

Baldus joined a Mastermind group comprised of other principals working in small rural districts.

She quickly volunteered for the **Hot Seat** so that she could bring her own **Problem of Practice** to the group - a troublesome system allowing parents to request which teachers their children would have that had begun creating conflicts among her staff and in the community.

“The process is easy,” she says of the experience. “It feels almost therapeutic to really lay out your problem.”

The group set to work sharing their own perspectives, past experiences and expertise. The result was a library of student-centered solutions collected in the **summaries provided to all participants after each session**, ranging from presenting teacher showcases to using achievement data and SEL metrics to demonstrate the value of intentional classroom composition that Baldus says, “really lit a fire under us.”

And because CEE Masterminds maintain a **strict code of confidentiality**, Baldus says she can also feel secure discussing sensitive considerations that would have been more difficult to bring up in a group of colleagues from her own school or district. “I’m willing to be way more vulnerable inside that Mastermind.”

Finally, Baldus has found her professional network expanding as a direct result of the scaffolding provided by the Mastermind process. She connects with several of her Mastermind colleagues regularly now.

“The Mastermind has allowed me to make some of those connections in a more natural way,” she says. “It really is creating relationships that are going to be longer lasting than just a spring or fall (Mastermind) series.”

Let’s Connect!



The Center for Educational Effectiveness

Discover more about this
and other exceptional CEE
solutions at

effectiveness.org