

Personalized Learning in Action Woonsocket Schools, Woonsocket, RI

Jenny Chan-Remka, an assistant superintendent in her second year at Woonsocket, brings longstanding conviction for personalized learning. In 8 years of teaching self-contained ESL classes and 4 years of teaching mathematics, Chan-Remka worked to differentiate for students who spanned beginner, intermediate and advanced levels of language acquisition. In her words, "I'm big on differentiated instruction. But I think it's physically impossible for one teacher to differentiate instruction to 25 kids unless we provide them with the tools."

In Woonsocket, Chan-Remka and other administrators are working to give teachers those tools. Woonsocket administrators have identified individual classrooms across all six Woonsocket elementary schools, and a full 8th grade level team in the middle school where teachers will have special technology and supports to implement personalized learning models. The goal is to learn from these classrooms and begin to spread successful models to additional classrooms. Chan-Remka and administrators have worked to bring additional resources into the district to provide devices for these classrooms, they have selected software they feel best will support their students' needs, and have identified early adopter teachers who would be willing to embrace the iteration that comes with piloting a new model.

Once school starts, teachers will not be alone in implementing these models in their classrooms. In order to support a new one-on-one mentoring model as part of the Summit Basecamp program the 8th grade team is using, school and district administrators will join in as mentors, both ensuring students have an adult to help them reflect on their individual learning plan, and also to give administrators first-hand insight into the personalized learning implementation. School and district administrators will also meet every other week with teachers from the 8th grade team to identify concerns and celebrate successes. Chan-Remka knows this will be a process, and hopes to add additional grades and classrooms to their personalized learning implementation next year. In the long-term, she foresees an education system where every student will have their own individual educational plan, which would ensure all students are able to learn in a style that works best for them.