

Learning Curve Educational Consulting to help Tennessee Schools be First to the Top

Learning Curve Educational Consulting (LCEC) has been approved as a professional development provider by the Tennessee Department of Education. LCEC, a Tennessee-based, woman owned, s-corp that works with schools and school systems, was one of 57 organizations approved by the Tennessee Department of Education to provide professional development services as part of the state's Race to the Top plan to help struggling schools.

"We were very excited to hear that we are an approved vendor," said Dr. Terry Lashley, LCEC President. "We look forward to partnering with Tennessee districts to help them use data to improve instruction. Several Tennessee schools have already achieved tremendous gains by implementing a data-driven decision making process and we would like to help others reach their goals."

LCEC professional development services build effective district-wide based data teams and/or school based teacher data teams through the "Using Data" process, an innovative program designed to fundamentally change teaching and learning through the use of data. Developed by TERC, a leading educational research and development organization, with a grant from the National Science Foundation and evaluated by independent researchers, Using Data has documented gains in student achievement in mathematics, science and other content areas and has been successful in narrowing achievement gaps between economic and racial groups, as well as increasing collaboration, data use and instructional improvement.

Unlike many traditional professional development programs, the Using Data process does not just teach educators the general principles of how to use data, rather participants in the program do real work in real time. They focus on their local data to identify student learning problems, discover the causes for those problems, and create action plans to address the problems and achieve results.

Using Data in Tennessee

Lashley began working with the Johnson County, Tennessee, school district and their supervisor of instruction at the time, Dr. David Timbs, to implement the Using Data process in 2003. Building the district's capacity to analyze and use student data has made a significant difference for Johnson County in recent years. Student performance on the state assessment has shown significant improvement. Science and Math scores rose in grades 3, 5, and 8 and the gap between regular education and special education students narrowed considerably.

One elementary school in Mountain City, Tennessee, earned a federal designation *as a Blue Ribbon School* for their outstanding progress. Mountain City Elementary, part of Johnson County Schools, serves 450 students – of whom 67 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch and 13 percent are in special education. In 2009, 99 percent of the student body scored proficient in math and social studies, 98 percent were proficient in science and 100 percent scored proficient in reading and language arts.



Lashley notes that the Using Data process has given teachers and administrators at Mountain City Elementary the tools they need to take care of their own data needs – to be self-supporting and self-sustaining. “They’ve made a lot of discoveries about themselves, and they’re using the data to make really good decisions. They are focusing energy in the right places and helping all students learn.”

For more information about Learning Curve Educational Consulting see www.learningcurveec.com/

To learn more about Johnson County’s implementation of Using Data see usingdata.terc.edu/casestudies

