

MELBA SCHOOL DISTRICT #136 CASE STUDY

A PATH TO THE COMMON CORE



MELBA SCHOOL FACTS

**LOCATED IN A
RURAL TOWN IN
CANYON COUNTY**

**805 STUDENTS
MAKE UP MELBA
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL, MELBA
MIDDLE SCHOOL,
AND MELBA
HIGH SCHOOL**

**TITLE I SCHOOL
WITH 411
STUDENTS**

**ELEMENTARY
MATHEMATICS
CURRICULUM:
ORIGO STEPPING
STONES**

**ORIGO EDUCATION
CUSTOMER
SINCE 2012**

**DEMOGRAPHICS:
73% WHITE AND
25% HISPANIC**



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MELBA'S CHALLENGE

In 2012 the Melba School District was faced with finding a mathematics curriculum that was aligned to the Common Core State Standards. With the new guidelines on the horizon, Superintendent Andy Grover and Sherry Ann Adams set to work on finding a program that would benefit their students and provide support and teaching tools for their educators.

Sherry Ann was faced with a challenge, "we needed to move from an algorithm-based curriculum to something better suited to the Common Core State Standards." This decision would bring a big change in student instruction and teaching methods. Overhauling their teaching standards was not as simple as purchasing a new textbook. It would require commitment from the curriculum leaders and teachers to transform Melba's classrooms.

MOVING FORWARD

The Melba team evaluated several math curricula in search of the best solution, eventually choosing *ORIGO Stepping Stones*. The team believed it was the best suited to tackle the challenges faced with implementing the Common Core. The digital aspect of the program would help modernize their classrooms. Built-in instructional videos assist teachers in increasing their knowledge of pedagogy. And the comprehensive resources in the program enable instruction to be easily differentiated.

"We strive to include technology in our school on a regular basis," said Sherry Ann Adams. "*Stepping Stones'* connection with technology was exactly what we were looking for." Melba teachers are able to access their lesson planning online, from any computer. The digital teaching tools help engage students and bring excitement to the classrooms. *Stepping Stones* is a mix of both digital and print components. The balance provides hands-on materials and activities that are equally important for young students' development.

Teachers are able to accommodate all levels of learning because they have access to the entire curriculum, grades K-5. They can take a step back for those students who need a little more help and give extra challenge questions for those who are ready to learn more. The lessons are structured to constantly revisit a topic so students fully understand the concepts. "*The guided instruction and stepping through lessons are wonderful for our students and teachers,*" said Sherry Ann.

One of the keys to Melba's success in implementing the Common Core has been the increased focus on developing pedagogy through Professional Learning. The lessons in the new curriculum have short videos

linked in so educators can review the topics before teaching. During the first year of their implementation, Sherry Ann encouraged her teachers to meet once a week to watch 2-3 *ORIGO MathEd* videos.

"These videos have been a lifesaver for our teachers. They really enjoy watching them and finding the pieces that inspire them. Anytime you need a refresher on a concept you can get it. ORIGO MathEd is a phenomenal piece you don't normally get with a curriculum."

BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE

When it came to switching from an algorithm-based math curriculum, to the conceptual learning approach in the Common Core State Standards, Sherry Ann anticipated there would be some growing pains.

"Moving from the previous standards to the new CCSS, there were going to be some gaps that would need to be filled. Stepping Stones allowed teachers to quickly see what students should know in order to be successful and provides intervention and/or enrichment when necessary."

One of the biggest differences that can be seen in students is the increased understanding of mathematical concepts and ability to apply them. Students are drawing conclusions and making connections at a faster pace. Sherry Ann added, "*Our students are now able to understand these mathematical concepts and patterns on their own. Third graders, who have only been taught with Stepping Stones for the last three years, are receiving the highest scores in the district on the SBAC test. This is huge for us.*"

Sherry Ann Adams is experiencing the students' success on both a professional and personal level. Her own children are thriving with the new approach. "*My daughter is in 2nd grade and her mathematics knowledge is incredible. For instance, one evening she was doing her homework where she had to loop the number of fingers. She walked through the process and by the end was able to see patterns and make mathematical connections for the exercise she was working on. I was blown away by the knowledge she already has for mathematics.*"

The Common Core State Standards are already proving to be a success at Melba Elementary School. The district is very excited about the impact of the new standards and *Stepping Stones* will have on the students' future. Sherry Ann Adams looks forward to hearing about test scores when her students get to middle school and apply the concepts they've learned to algebra and beyond.

Learn more about [ORIGO Stepping Stones](#)