

2017 NCSM Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas
Iris Carl Grant Recipient Reflection
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"In your role as a leader in mathematics education, you are going to enjoy the NCSM conference!" This quote came from a fellow math leader in the state of South Carolina. Therefore, I was initially eager to attend the conference and to expand my knowledge based on mathematics leadership from other mathematics practitioners. The theme for the conference had me hooked at first sight: "Engaging in the Mission of Mathematics Leadership: High Quality, Meaningful and Relevant Mathematics for All." As I scanned through the program book, (hard copy and app) I could not stop selecting great topics. With over 288 sessions, I first had to remember that there are only a few hours in a day and only one me so I could not attend all of the wonderful sessions. After I attended as many as I could, I sorted my experienced at the 2017 NCSM conference into 3 categories: Professional Growth, Personal Growth and Connecting with Others.

Professional Growth

As a lifelong learner, I am constantly searching for with ways to grow professionally. After the first morning session for new affiliate members, I knew I was making another step forward in becoming more involved with NCSM. During the conference, I was asked by the Southern 1 Regional Director to be the NCSM State Leader for South Carolina. This role will allow me to grow as a leader in the mathematics community. As mathematics specialist in my school district, my role is similar to a coach's roles and the session "Engaging Leadership: Supporting Mathematics Instruction" provide a must-have resource to use when working with teachers as I complete classroom observations. This session provided participants with a Math Solution Instructional Practices Inventory which is similar to a checklist to observe the teacher and student best practice in the area of learning environment, reasoning and sense making, focus and coherence and formative assessment. The session allowed us to engage in a lesson and then reflect how we will assess the lesson based on the inventory/checklist. As my state moves toward the teacher rubric as a means of evaluation, this tool will assist in helping the teachers and I understand the process more effectively.

Another session that has and will continue to have an impact on my professional growth is "Ten Instructional Tweaks Every Math Leader Needs." This session left me with practical tips/tweaks to share with my teachers to improve instructional practices while moving pass DOK Level 1. As a leader, some of the more practical instructional strategies seem hard to support and explain effectively, while still maintaining the high cognitive demand that our college and career state standards require.

Personal Growth

The session, "Crucial Coaching Conversations That Make All the Difference," placed emphasis on the how to be mindful when you respond to teachers in coaching conversations. Being mindful when meeting with teachers, leaders and other stakeholders elicits positive change within the learning environment. Such a valuable lesson derived from coaching sessions resonates in all conversation I have as an individual. More personal growth will come this year as I extend the learning outside of the conference. Many leaders around the conference regional caucus shared how book studies, publications and the online resources on the NCSM websites (www.mathedleadership.com) keeps one updated and abreast to the trends in mathematics leadership.

Connecting with Others

I am currently the president of The South Carolina Leaders of Mathematics Education (SCLME) and we have recently become an affiliate of NCSM. Therefore, I was given the opportunity to connect with others at the Affiliate meeting. Connecting with others from other regions provided clarity on how we are faced with similar issues such as effective professional learning opportunities with new standards and limited resources. My role as a District Mathematics Specialist has several roles and connecting with other assured me that I was not alone on the journey of trying to meet the needs of K-12 teachers. I also loved talking to the Southern Region 1 Director, Debbie Crocker. Her leadership and guidance was pivotal in my role as a leader of SCLME and how NCSM can assist in my efforts. I am already in the planning stages of having a Leadership Institute for Fall 2017, and I plan to invite her to come and represent NCSM. It was great to see how NCSM has regional directors connect with states to help expand leadership with resources such as PRIME Framework, Principles of Learning, It's Time, etc.

The opportunity to attend this conference was invaluable and I want to personally thank the donors and sponsors of the Iris Carl Mathematics Fund for their generosity that afforded me this wonderful opportunity. The conference coordinator, Cynthia Schneider, stated the goal for everyone attending the conference was to "Connect, Engage, Make a Difference." Those three tasks resonate within my daily role as district mathematics specialist K-12. This conference allowed me to connect with other mathematics specialists, engage in sessions and learning experiences, which allows me to go back to my district and state and make a difference when I share and apply the information learned from the conference.