

48th NCSM ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Oakland – San Francisco Bay Area

Iris Carl Grant Recipient Reflection

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As I reflect on the wonderful experiences from the NCSM Annual Conference, my first reaction is that NCSM is not just for administrators and supervisors of mathematics teachers. Its purpose encompasses any educator that works within the field of mathematics and with teachers. This idea was never clearer than after hearing Michelle Rinehart's message at the Tuesday luncheon on "Leading Teachers to Impact Student Learning". In this session, Michelle talked about the roles mathematics supervisors play in leading the conversation about leveraging technology, resources, and best practices in support of effective learning. As a Regional Educational Service Agency Mathematics Mentor, this describes exactly what I am charged with doing. Ms. Rinehart talked about the various pathways that educators can follow to become leaders and how these courses differ greatly from the traditional road through administration. This was eye opening and it is exciting to think about the unlimited possibilities for all of us. As support for these young leaders, my role becomes less prescribed and my vision of the work I am to do becomes cloudier.

I was able to make so many new connections with educators from all over the country and beyond our borders. I enjoyed striking up conversations with people in different roles in education and with different levels of experiences. One of the highlights was the Regional Directors and State Team Leaders meeting on Monday. I met representatives from other states who share similar responsibilities and discussed future plans for state and regional activities. I participated in the NCSM Regional Caucus for Southern Region 1, where we divided into stations to discuss ways to build membership within our state organizations, build leadership capacity, use newly revealed online resources, and discuss ideas for hosting regional events. We were able to exchange contact information so that these conversations can continue. I was also able spend time with Debbie Crocker, our NCSM South 1 Regional Director, while volunteering at the Registration booth Monday afternoon. Debbie is very knowledgeable and has given me great advice on several occasions. She is always so encouraging and supportive.

As I returned to Georgia to complete the work for this school year and begin planning for 2016-2017 with my schools, districts, regional agency, the Georgia Council of Supervisors of Mathematics and the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics, I began to think about where we would like to be by this time next year and in the years to come. I realize that across the nation, math educators are focusing on similar goals and share similar expectations. The theme for the 48th NCSM Annual Conference – *BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING MATHEMATICS: Leveraging Education Innovation and Research to Inspire and Engage* – is a great interpretation of these goals and expectations. Because there are so many resources readily available for math educators and so much information can be easily attained by

all stakeholders, filtering what is best for student learning has become a monumental task. When choosing which sessions to attend, I wanted to hear from the experts about what research shows are best practices for students and how to support teachers in these practices. I was not disappointed by my choices. I started the conference with Dr. Keith Delvin, who explained “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” in the world of apps and game-based learning. His presentation was very thought-provoking and filled with resources to expand my thinking. I ended the conference by attending the “Ignite!” session. This was a great wrap-up that left me with 10 more ideas to think about. This platform allows each speaker to briefly discuss their passion in a condensed, precise manner. I want to incorporate this way of presenting in my education courses for math teachers! In between these two dynamic sessions, I was able to attend sessions by Lucy West, who made me reflect on my beliefs and realize that I am not powerless; Jo Boaler, who presented the latest brain science research and shared information about allowing children to use their fingers in mathematics; and Dan Meyer, who challenged me to “turn down the math”. Those sessions were all on the first day! I also attended sessions with Dr. Cathy Seeley, Dr. Deborah Ball, Dr. Tim Kanold, Marilyn Burns, and many others.

I want to become more involved in NCSM and continue to serve in an active role in my state organization. I look forward to participating in other NCSM events and to doing my part in ‘building bridges between leadership and learning mathematics’. I would like to thank donors of the Iris Carl Mathematics Leadership Fund for your contributions and the members of the Awards Committee that allowed me to experience the NCSM Annual Conference through the Iris Carl Travel Grant. This experience has helped me to continue my personal professional growth as well as provide ongoing support to other mathematics educators. Attending this conference would not have been possible without the support from caring individuals who share the desire to further the education of leaders in the field of mathematics. I appreciate the opportunity that was given to me by their efforts.