

*41st Annual NCSM Conference, Washington, D.C.
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Winning the Iris Carl Grant this last year was wonderful. I was able to attend the NCSM Conference, "It's PRIME Time: Learning and Leading Together" in Washington, D.C. for the first time. I was in my first year as a mathematics instructional leader and really wanted to take my department to the next level. The opening speaker, Katy Haycock, was amazing. She gave examples of schools making huge gains when it seemed everything was working against them. To every excuse people give as to why students cannot achieve, she showed an example where given the same circumstances, they are achieving. This was truly inspiring. This is why I went into education!

The structure of the conference was very well organized. During each time slot, there were different sessions to pick from to cater to each individual interest. I learned different techniques to keep kids engaged and how to tell if you are right brained, left brained, or center brained. In addition, I learned ways to give kids brain breaks to activate both sections of their brains. The importance of wait time was also stressed. So often teachers move on as soon as they get a correct answer, and many students need more time to process which leads to greater understanding.

Another session I attended dealt with a computer system called Autograph. With this program, you could find pictures online of naturally occurring parabolas and use Autograph to match the equation to the picture. This was a great way to bring real life into the classroom. The speaker was able to bring in famous bridges, fountains, and sculptures into the classroom. This would work great for a cross-curricular unit. I have since attended the Leadership Academy in Indianapolis where I was able to learn even more. If it were not for the Iris Carl Grant, I would not have been able to experience the NCSM Conference and continue to help my teachers grow.