

## **What keeps Education Leaders Awake at Night?**

Tuesday, 11:00 am -12:00 pm

Scribe: Ann Watson

### **Jenny House, Red Rocks Reports, moderator**

**Peter Birdsall, Executive director, CCSESA** (intermediate regional manager)

California County Services educational – 58 counties with superintendents elected

Background on their county service centers – they provide programs for the following: rec services, special education, migrant families, homeless, incarcerated. They are funded by the state annually receive \$300 million dollars and considered to be an arm of the state. The County Superintendent approves the school district budgets, work with the state and districts to help manage financial resources. The county office also helps to review materials; districts turn to the county for their expertise. Within the state of CA, there are 11 different regions that work across county lines. LA county has a very high population, right after Michigan when compared to other states. The counties are also very diverse ranging from rural small schools compared to large urban schools like LA Unified.

CA is back financially - 1.6 billion increase in education (governor approved)

Revenues up 4.5 billion this year so that means increase in 2 billion to educ.\$250 per student. CA is also looking for large one time funding to help implement the CCSS.

Governor is proposing district and county keeping the money and spend it on what they want. The state will not tell them what to do with the money. Money is non-categorical.

### **Preston Smith, President Rocketship Education**

Charter Schools – good and bad experiences with vendors

Background: Major goal to narrow the achievement gap. They are succeeding in Math performing with the 10 wealthiest school districts in state. Currently they have 7 schools grades K-5, and will be national next year. There are 600 kids per school with multiple grade levels. 90% qualify for free lunch.

### **3 ways that we can help them address their problems?**

#### **Rocket Ship:**

3 main pillars

1. Personalized learning
2. Parents must advocate for their kids(Parent Square)- AnnWC
3. Make teaching the best job in America

### **Three challenges that keep them awake**

Peter Birdsall:

1. Wants the flexibility for spending their funds, now they have it and not sure what to spend it on.
2. CCSS/Smarter Balance testing - concerned about tech aspects, will they be ready?

3. County also works with arts, science, mental health – how do you work all of these things back into the curriculum?
4. Law repealed that schools must buy off the state approved materials list. Now the worry is that the publishers will come in and say they are perfectly aligned with the CCSS.

Preston Smith:

1. CCSS interested in elevating performance. Concern about publishers role in this process. The messaging says you better buy this or else- Randi Weinberg trying to get rid of standardized testing and CCSS. The messaging needs to be how products can elevate the performance.
2. Tech and schools. How are tech companies and content companies are working with schools. Thought content would catch up but not seeing that. Common sales pitch they hear: “We hold breadth vs. depth.” They need more depth into subject areas. They are more interested in how data is measuring success not just internal research in a company. They want to see research done in several other school settings.
3. Teacher professional development. Tech, tutoring and students all in the same space. Put control in hands of teacher and most do not know how to manage this. Teachers coming out of schools are not trained to do this so will Rocketship be able to back fill this lack of knowledge.

### **How can companies help with these challenges**

Peter Birdsall

What is the capacity of the vendor to work across all of the devices that will be used in the classroom? BYOT is going to be very prevalent in CA. With 300K teachers in CA - we need to have the tools to support and train teachers. Open source is now an option now that the approved list is not being used. It is important that the publishers can also work alongside the open resources. Now they can look out of state at other models.

Preston Smith

- Much easier for vendors to align their products to CCSS instead of each state standard.
- Need to get our messaging more positive about why CCSS matters and how this will make US more competitive globally.
- How many companies are really in the classroom and understand how technology works with teachers and students. Ask yourselves, have we embedded people in a school where we really work with teachers to see how our product works.
- Depth vs. breadth. Go with the depth.
- Want to streamline data from several content providers helps to personalize learning.
- Moving towards one or two vendors
- Inbloom where all are assessing in common way is a great example of what works.
- A non starter is when they hear a vendor say we can do it all.
- Their charter schools are now the 15<sup>th</sup> largest district in this country.

How do you sell to Charter schools? Go through central office and education officer. Have 600 students touching your product so we will know if it works. So teachers can align it with their content

How do you sell to the county offices? School districts govern their own budgets – larger districts go straight there to sell. For middle sized districts, if there is a common need within the county group of representatives can discuss or see presentations. Counties provide forum for medium and small districts.

### **Questions**

Q. How much will districts be guided by math adoption list this year?

A. The default will be the list. Schools will have to piecemeal their own curriculum for math or use the list of approved vendors.

Q. Has there been an assembly of superintendents to standardize technology requirements?

A. No, by the summer technology will jump to the top of the list now that the finance situation has been settled.

Some opportunities with charter schools for standardizing technology – charter schools are better positioned to deal with this.

Rocket ship has a cutting edge vision of how they customize content – how many other schools are doing this. This is spread across the country – the blended content

There is a ground swell movement for collaboration and up-to-date data for decision making – need products that can provide this.

9 districts in CA have submitted a waiver for NCLB – AYP, etc. - 1.6 million students. Other districts can participate.