The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) provides middle grades and high schools in member states with intensive professional development in leading edge literacy and math strategies that enhance students’ abilities to meet new college- and career-readiness standards. The training is offered at no cost to qualifying schools in member states except Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee.*

Pass this information on to your peers: superintendents, principals, math and literacy supervisors, and others who might consider offering this professional development to teachers. Contact us to share your successes.

Read on: Find out how your school and district will enhance students’ creative thinking and problem-solving abilities while enhancing their skills to meet state standards and succeed in school and life.

This week: Debbie Blankenship finds MDC’s purposefully designed lessons pay off.
“Each one was tested in many, many classrooms and revised multiple times before being released,” Merritt added. “They were all designed purposefully. When changes are made to the script, the lessons can lose their power.”

Blankenship explains the many benefits from implementing the FALs. “An in-depth concept is addressed in a short period of time,” she said. “FALs allow for flexibility for different academic levels, and students are actively engaged … They are quick, useful formative assessments and an excellent critique of student understanding.”

**Getting to Know FALs**

Blankenship implemented six FALs during the 2014-15 school year. Four were Concept Development (CD) lessons and two were Problem Solving (PS) lessons:

1. Interpreting Algebraic Expressions (CD)
2. Building and Solving Linear Equations (CD)
3. Representing Linear and Exponential Growth (CD)
4. Representing Quadratic Functions Graphically (CD)
5. Interpreting Data: Muddying the Waters (PS)
6. Generalizing Patterns: Table Tiles (PS)

“At first I wasn’t sure about the Problem Solving FALs. They don’t always have an answer,” she said. “But I think I like them best now. They are open-ended and allow for different opinions.”

“It’s all about students being able to justify their reasoning,” Merritt added.

Blankenship and Merritt both recommend that teachers begin with implementing concept development FALs since they are more structured. These lessons are intended to be used about two-thirds of the way through a unit, after students are taught the content involved. Problem Solving FALs can be used any time throughout the year. Both types of lessons bring to light common student misconceptions of high priority topics in mathematics.

**Significant Results**

Below is Blankenship’s data for three CD FALs. The pre- and post-lesson assessments numbers are based on teacher judgment of students’ understanding of math concepts embedded in the FAL. Each student is scored by the teacher on a scale of 0-3, with 3 = understanding, 2 = some understanding, 1= little to no understanding and 0 = no response.

The results indicate that students significantly increased their level of understanding of math concepts in all three of these FALs. For example, in the Building and Solving Linear Equations FAL shown first in the table, the average student increased from 1.3 (pre-lesson) to 2.6 (post-lesson), doubling their level of assessment.
Don’t miss the opportunity to send your teaching and leadership team to the most important professional development conferences of the year.

**Networking Conference**

Can your district benefit from planning strong math assignments to meet college- and career-ready standards? Join us for the Fourth Annual College- and Career Readiness Standards Networking Conference, July 11-13, in Louisville, Kentucky.

**HSTW Conference**

Share and learn best practices for engaging your students while preparing them for life after graduation. Join us for the 30th Annual High Schools That Work Staff Development Conference, July 13-16, 2016, in Louisville, Kentucky.

**SREB Ready**

The Readiness Courses Institute will be held July 11-15 during the 30th Annual HSTW Staff Development Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Click here to learn how you may receive up to $600 in stipends to attend the Readiness Courses Institute. **Bonus**: Attend and receive complementary registration for the High Schools That Work Staff Development Conference.

Ready for High School courses in literacy and math prepare eighth- and ninth-graders for high school and strengthen their critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills. They will be available at no cost to schools starting in 2016-17. For schools interested in implementing these courses, we encourage you to attend the Readiness Courses Institute.

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### PRE- AND POST-LESSON ASSESSMENT DATA OF STUDENT GROWTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of FAL</th>
<th>Average Pre-Lesson Assessment</th>
<th>Average Post-Lesson Assessment</th>
<th>Average Growth Summary</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building and Solving Linear Equations</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing Linear and Exponential Growth</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representing Quadratic Functions Graphically</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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