

Florida PROMiSE Statewide Professional Development (with FSU and UF)

The Florida Partnership to Rejuvenate and Optimize Mathematics and Science Education (Florida PROMiSE) was a statewide project funded by the Florida Department of Education for three years beginning in 2007 (\$21,904,944). Florida PROMiSE was a partnership among the three Florida Public Research Flagship Universities (USF, FSU, UF), four large school districts (Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Duval, Seminole), three regional educational consortia, Florida Virtual School, and Horizon Research, Inc.

The principal goal of Florida PROMiSE was to increase student learning of mathematics and science by providing K-12 mathematics and science teachers with high-quality, sustained professional development (PD) that enhanced their disciplinary content knowledge, their use of research-based pedagogical strategies, and their understanding of the recently-implemented Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS). A major component of the project was a series of content-focused summer institutes. Four follow-up sessions were conducted during each school year to address pedagogical issues not covered in the summer institutes.

CSL provided the formative internal evaluations in an evaluation plan for PROMiSE developed to maximize the role played by data-based decision making, using rigorous formative and summative evaluation approaches. The PROMiSE formative evaluation provided feedback to project leaders on the key issues of fidelity of implementation, program quality, meeting local needs, and operation of the partnership. Formative feedback to project leaders was collected through a variety of triangulated methods:

- Participant feedback forms are used to document participant perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of project activities (workshops, mentoring, etc.). Feedback instruments, developed by the internal evaluation team, contain both “participant rating” items and open-ended prompts for narrative response; they are completed by participants in each major project activity and as an end-of-year reflection.
- Observations of a sample of PD sessions and other project activities by trained observers provide a consistent set of ratings using a validated, reliable instrument – the “Professional Development Observation Protocol” developed by Horizon Research, Inc.
- Focus group and individual interviews are used to gather feedback from a subset of participants, PD providers, and PROMiSE partners regarding project activities and impact. Probing questions help add information about individuals’ perceptions and experiences, adding depth and detail to the data obtained through surveys.
- Project-produced materials, such as web-based support tools and course or workshop materials, are reviewed by external experts to evaluate the design and content of such materials, ease of access and use, and to provide feedback on accuracy, appropriateness, and usability of the products.

CSL’s evaluation activities assisted project leaders in recognizing where changes in activities and programs may have been needed to ensure that the project remained on-track and achieved what it proposed to do. Formative evaluation also informed summative evaluation of adjustments and changes, and helped pave the way for appropriate summative measures that provide an assessment structure that is appropriate, doable, objective, and meaningful.