



INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

Instructional Framework Case Study

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Overview of Case Study

Since its inception, the Bainum Family Foundation has sought to help children and families thrive, often by supporting education. In 2012, the foundation began to develop a framework to assist teachers in teaching English/Language Arts literacy standards. The Instructional Framework for 21st-Century Educators is meant to fill a gap that the foundation staff, who had long worked in these schools, had identified. Administrators and teachers at Seventh-day Adventist schools needed a consistent and tested approach to teaching and learning from kindergarten through eighth grade that would also meet the Common Core standards.

After conducting extensive research, in 2014 the foundation, based in Silver Spring, Maryland, partnered with George E. (G.E.) Peters Adventist School, a kindergarten through eighth-grade Seventh-day Adventist School located in nearby Hyattsville, Maryland, to test this new framework. While the two-year pilot project provided some early warning signs about the difficulty of embedding the Instructional Framework in Seventh-day Adventist schools, foundation staff felt strongly that they had seen promising feedback and should try partnering with another school.

In 2017, the foundation began a collaboration with Creation Village World School, a brand-new elementary school located near Disney World in Celebration, Florida, that was just getting established and had several conditions that made it seem like a good fit. Creation Village World School agreed to be a demonstration site that would integrate and implement the Instructional Framework and its practices into its academic program. Foundation staff hoped that this would be the starting point for replicating the Instructional Framework in many other Seventh-day Adventist schools.

After five years of collaboration and with both organizations' strategies and priorities shifting, the foundation and Creation Village World School mutually decided to end their partnership in June 2022.

The completion of this partnership was timely because it occurred as the foundation was updating its programmatic strategy to increase its investments toward early childhood outcomes (i.e., early learning, mental health and well-being, health, family economic security and housing stability).

Additionally, with the foundation's revamped strategy came the priority of following the lead of its partner communities and organizations. Because partnering with the foundation around curriculum and instruction was not a priority across the Seventh-day Adventist education system, the foundation chose to end the Instructional Framework project. The foundation continues to support systems-level change in Seventh-day Adventist education by focusing on building the capacity of school and educational leaders.

Most important, the foundation had achieved a central goal for the project. The Instructional Framework for kindergarten through eighth grade was completely written with more than 600 documents and a companion rubric. The framework is freely available online for teachers and administrators around the country who want to enhance their teaching and advance student achievement.

Because the foundation was sunsetting the work, in late 2021 it commissioned an independent case study to capture the history of this initiative. This case study charts the work of the Instructional Framework throughout those years, with an emphasis on the experiences and learnings that emerged that might be helpful to the foundation, particularly in embarking on new approaches to meet its mission: to work alongside communities experiencing racial and economic disparities to create lasting systems of change for the well-being of children and families.

The Backstory

The Instructional Framework is a natural outgrowth of the work the Bainum Family Foundation has been doing since 1968, both in its area of focus — education — and in its approach — learning about a need and coming up with a solution for that need. Throughout this time, the founders and foundation staff learned from their experiences and adjusted their approach.

At its inception, founders Stewart Bainum Sr. and Jane Bainum provided low-interest college loans and scholarships and other supports to students in need, first to students in public high schools in Southeast Washington, D.C., and later to students who wished to attend faith-based boarding and day schools throughout the United States, particularly schools run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of which the Bainums were members.

Focusing on root issues in schools

Starting in 2008, under the leadership of Barbara Bainum, the Bainums' daughter, the foundation began to look at some of the root issues that it was hearing about from schools, said David Daniels, CEO and President of the Bainum Family Foundation. The Bainums, who had received their education in Seventh-day Adventist schools and credited much of their family's later success to that experience, wanted to support excellent schools that are sustainable over the long haul, said Amy Soper, Director, Organizational Learning and Effectiveness, at the Bainum Family Foundation.

From this new lens, in 2010 the foundation launched an initiative to help Seventh-day Adventist schools in the Takoma Park, Maryland, area be deliberate in working together. Seventh-day Adventist education is often described as a “system of schools” rather than a school system, noted Soper. This initiative created a format for the Seventh-day Adventist schools in Takoma Park to function as a true system, rather than as a collection of independent schools, noted Daniels, who at the time was the principal at Takoma Academy, a high school that was part of the pilot project. Soper, meanwhile, was vice-principal at the academy.

The other two schools were Sligo Adventist School and John Nevins Andrews School, which served as feeder schools to Takoma Academy and were less than a five-minute drive from the academy. An additional three or four elementary schools were also feeder schools.

The Bainum Family Foundation partnered with the Potomac Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, which oversaw the schools in Takoma Park, to carry out the \$5 million initiative.

The Seventh-day Adventist Initiative (SDAI) focused on five areas:

- 1) Leadership
- 2) Partnership
- 3) Education
- 4) Finance and administration
- 5) Facilities

Why Bainum Invested in the Instructional Framework

As the foundation was undertaking its initiative, Soper and Daniels began working closely with the funder from their positions at the Takoma Academy. Their school was receiving an array of support including structural improvements, such as replacing roofs and flooring, and a new approach to professional development that shared data across all three participating schools to improve student learning.

“When I was still principal and Amy was vice principal, we had started working with this cohort of schools,” Daniels said. “What we kept hearing was that there was not a rigorous English/Language Arts program that was feeding into our school, and we really wanted to address that. This was coming from our high school teachers.”

“And then as we talked to elementary teachers, they were confirming the same thing,” Daniels added. “They did not feel that the curriculum that was in place was as rigorous as they wanted it to be.”

A new initiative to help prepare students for high school

For a time, the foundation funded one-off professional development offerings for school staff, Daniels said. But then the foundation hired Daniels and Soper to oversee the SDAI in July 2012. Once at the foundation, they began building out an idea to address the education gap that left students poorly prepared for high school. They came up with the concept of an Instructional Framework for kindergarten through nine grade that would provide guidance to help students think critically and be on grade level for reading, and for teachers to meet the Common Core standards, which had come out in 2010.

The Potomac Conference, which the foundation was already partnering with, would oversee the development and rollout of the Instructional Framework as part of the broader SDAI initiative. The foundation had for years partnered with the conference, which was responsible for curriculum in the schools and could give its stamp of approval to this outside entity coming in, Daniels noted. The foundation saw the conference’s role as essential, Soper added.

“[In 2012], partnering at the conference level to develop and implement this tool seemed to be the most ideal setting because the curriculum for elementary schools is overseen by the conference’s Office of Education,” Soper said. “If all of a conference’s schools were consistently using the framework, then they would be able to start collecting conferencewide data about student performance, which could yield some insights for creating common practices in Adventist education.”

She said that, in the beginning, conference staff were closely involved in discussions about the framework development, particularly regarding ways to provide a continuum of education from grade to grade so that students would be prepared for high school.

But just a year later, in July 2013, the Bainum Family Foundation ended its agreement with the Potomac Conference to oversee the SDAI, of which the Instructional Framework was a part. According to Daniels and correspondence between the foundation and the conference, the priorities of the conference staff appeared to differ from those of the foundation. Among the issues was that the conference leadership had changed and the current leaders did not seem as engaged with this work, Daniels said. The Bainum foundation brought the SDAI initiative back in-house. It began to focus on just two areas, the Instructional Framework and leadership development, rather than trying to help create a school system in the Potomac Conference, Daniels said.

They turned their attention to creating and testing the Instructional Framework and finding a school in which to pilot it.

What Is the Instructional Framework?

The Instructional Framework was designed to fill a gap in the Seventh-day Adventist schools. The Common Core State Standards,¹ a federal initiative designed to improve U.S. education, was released in 2010. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a set of academic standards and expectations for what every student should know and be able to do in every grade from kindergarten through 12th in Language Arts and math. The Common Core standards require teachers to teach multiple standards and for schools to ensure that students are progressing in those standards from year to year.

While many public schools had guidance and curricula that enabled them to meet the Common Core expectations in English/Language Arts and math, the Seventh-day Adventist schools did not. The Instructional Framework was *not* intended to be a detailed curriculum including specific plans for daily lessons. Instead, it would provide the overarching goals, expectations and learning standards but also give schools and instructors autonomy to plan individual lessons to meet students' needs, according to a 2012 description.

However, because quality lesson planning is central to effective teaching, model lessons would also be created to show the essential components of a lesson plan and to serve as examples of quality instruction. Additionally, lesson seeds — ideas that could be turned into more detailed lesson plans — were designed to serve as examples of how teachers could plan to multiple standards and across content areas, the document noted.

¹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/whatareccss.asp>

Bainum's goal with the Instructional Framework was to write a framework for each grade level from kindergarten through ninth grade that teachers could follow to teach these standards to all types of learners, said Ginger Slaughter, former Senior Manager, Instructional Development, at the Bainum Family Foundation, who wrote much of the framework. The framework would cover all the standards for the year, for each grade, for English/Language Arts. It would also allow teachers in different grade levels to use a consistent approach that built on the framework from grade to grade.

A framework to 'level the playing field'

"The framework was being designed to take the mystery out of teaching the Common Core," said Slaughter. "A big focus was showing how to backward plan and how to teach multiple standards in a lesson so teachers could teach all the standards in a school year. This was not something that was being taught at the time, at least not consistently, in the Adventist school system. We wanted to provide a resource for Seventh-day Adventist schools that would provide them with the same knowledge and opportunities that public schools were already given; we wanted to 'level the playing field,' so to speak."

"I know that the Instructional Framework can help teachers see possibilities that exist with teaching standards that they did not see before," she continued.

Added Soper, "Our hypothesis was that if clear expectations are set for student learning and teachers know what they are supposed to teach, students would be college and career prepared. If teachers are using these documents in how they are thinking about lessons, that should lead to students having increased performance."

From the start, the hope among foundation staff was to scale the Instructional Framework to potentially all Seventh-day Adventist schools as well as to a number of nondenominational schools. Daniels said he envisioned it would grow from a pilot project in Maryland to one that could be broadly implemented in such schools across the country.

"I had much larger aspirations [for the Instructional Framework]," Daniels said. "This problem that the Adventist schools were experiencing was not unique to Adventist schools. So, part of my thinking was that if we could get the fidelity of it operating, then we might be able to market it more widely than just in the Adventist system because most Christian schools that I've been engaged in don't have the resources to have coaches, to have this really targeted framework. And they don't have time to comb through every book that might meet the standards and for what most Christian faiths will allow in their school system. This did a lot of that and would [enable Adventist schools to] be very competitive with other public schools or school systems."

"I felt like if we could get the right sample and the right people bought into it, it could be much larger than the few schools we worked with," he continued. "I still believe that."

First Steps

As Soper and Daniels began settling into their new jobs at the Bainum Family Foundation in the summer of 2012, they got to work on putting plans in place to develop the Instructional

Framework. A consultant they had been working with helped develop a structure and process for the framework and served as the project manager. In October, Daniels and Soper described the Instructional Framework for the first time to the Bainum board. It was initially presented as part of the education tier of the SDAI, which was still underway with the Takoma Park area schools.

Soper spoke to about 25 people one-on-one to learn about their needs in the classroom and at school. She, Daniels and an independent consultant began interviewing and hiring writers to write units for kindergarten, grade three, grade six and grade nine, including Slaughter, a special education teacher with 14 years of experience. In early 2013, Soper sent an email to principals in the Takoma cluster to introduce them to the Instructional Framework and invite teachers to participate on a project review team. Teachers who elected to participate would provide feedback on drafts of the Instructional Framework based on their experiences in the classroom.

Asking teachers for input on the Instructional Framework

While the foundation had hired former and current teachers to write the Instructional Framework, it was crucial that whatever they produced resonated with the teachers they hoped to reach in the Seventh-day Adventist school system.

After nearly a year of formal preparation and much more than a year of considering such an approach, the framework was officially launched on May 8, 2013. That marked the first meeting of the writers, the foundation team, and the teachers and school leaders who were providing feedback. For the next year, the foundation team, writers and school staff met quarterly to receive and give feedback as the writers created grade-level units. For each grade level, four to five teachers, principals and administrators reviewed a draft.

“The first two years we were very intentional in including teachers and administrators in the region on the project review team,” Soper said. “We wanted to get their perspective on the framework. What did they like about it? What was missing?”

Participants on the project review team interviewed for this case study had nearly uniformly positive reactions to the Instructional Framework and their participation in the work.

One teacher who reviewed several grade levels of the Instructional Framework, Rachel Fuentes, said she liked its approach because it included a number of different reading strategies and teaching techniques for reaching students at different levels. It also filled a gap because the curriculum her school used was inconsistent about reading levels from one grade to another — so much so that teachers often did not know what their students’ reading levels were.

“I was happy to see that our curriculum was being updated so it could be competitive with what is outside our system,” she said. “A lot of the things [in the Instructional Framework] were ideas that I wanted to do. And so it was nice to know I was on the right path but just needed more direction.”

Teachers eager to pilot the Instructional Framework

Fuentes said she wished Bainum had carried out its later pilot at her school, Sligo Seventh-day Adventist, because the foundation had already invested there through its reading program for two years. Bainum was a familiar face, and she was enthusiastic about the Instructional Framework and would get other teachers on board.

“I think Sligo would have been the perfect school to pilot their program,” Fuentes said. “I was really excited about what Ginger was doing. I wanted to take her stuff with me and implement it. I would have tried to persuade at least the teacher below and the teacher above to try it. I feel like the initial step of teacher buy-in is so crucial to get teachers on board, and usually getting another teacher [to lead the buy-in] helps instead of the administration going in. Teachers are more willing to do things for other teachers.”

She said that teachers get a lot thrown at them such as new curriculum or practices every few years and can resent it unless these new requirements come with the support of fellow teachers.

Judie Rosa, another teacher on the review team, was equally enthusiastic about the framework. She described the curriculum her school used at the time as a “hodgepodge” and said that many teachers did not like it. Rosa noted that some teachers did not know how to teach to standards and that standards were not taught consistently across the Adventist system. She said that the Instructional Framework was sequential, it was organized, it was user-friendly, and it took the guesswork out of teaching.

Another helpful feature of the framework was the vertical alignment between grades, Rosa said. She said that Adventist schools do not always have such a system in place to make sure that students have the foundational knowledge they need to move to the next grade. Rosa said that the framework delineates the expectations of what students should be able to do and learn, which is not always clear in the Adventist schools. She was another teacher who wished she could have piloted the Instructional Framework at her school because she felt she could have “sold” it to the other teachers.

A third teacher, Kate Ford, also an Instructional Framework writer, said that having the Common Core standards laid out so clearly was particularly helpful. She also appreciated that the curriculum was written by teachers and that the foundation asked teachers for their feedback. Oftentimes, she noted, curriculum seems to be created by publishing companies that have limited insight into the realities of a classroom.

Pilot — G.E. Peters School

In 2014, after a year of creating and vetting several grade levels of the Instructional Framework, the foundation was ready to pilot it in a school. While it felt as though the framework was on the right track, the foundation needed to see whether it would work in a school setting, specifically in a Seventh-day Adventist school, which has particular requirements in its curriculum for teachers.

As foundation staff looked for a promising partner, G.E. Peters Adventist School, an Adventist kindergarten through eighth-grade school in nearby Hyattsville, Maryland, emerged as a good candidate. The Bainum Family Foundation had worked with the school before as part of its second phase of the SDAI project.

A promising start

Soper and Daniels had met with the G.E. Peters principal a number of times as part of a larger monthly networking event of all the principals participating in the SDAI. In those meetings, foundation staff shared with the group the work they were doing on the Instructional Framework. The principal at G.E. Peters quickly expressed interest in piloting the framework at the school. He was a new principal there and was looking to add academic rigor, Soper remembered him telling her. The principal also promised to provide the support that teachers needed to participate in the pilot.

In addition, Bainum staff reached out to the Allegheny East Conference's Office of Education, which oversaw G.E. Peters. Despite its experience with the Potomac Conference, the foundation staff still felt strongly that a critical element of scaling this work was to get the support of a conference in the Adventist system. The Education Superintendent, Judy Dent, was excited and supportive about piloting the framework and, if it went well, recommending it to other schools in the conference. G.E. Peters was the largest pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade school in its conference. It had an exceptional staff, and if the framework worked, G.E. Peters could serve as a model to disseminate the framework to other schools. Some of its teachers had been on the project review team and were familiar with the Instructional Framework.

Bainum made another move as well. The foundation hired an experienced teacher to finish writing the Instructional Framework and help the teachers at G.E. Peters use the framework. After bringing the development of the Instructional Framework in-house, foundation staff realized they needed additional staff to bring this work to fruition. When Soper first started developing the Instructional Framework, she hired a number of writers to write and edit various grades with the idea that it would strengthen the framework to have different voices represented. But after a time, staff realized that was not the best approach, in part because of the varied quality of the writing. Instead, in July 2014 they hired Slaughter, one of the writers who was particularly strong in her creation of the grade-level specific units. The idea was to provide a consistent voice throughout the framework. Part of Slaughter's job would be to oversee the pilot at G.E. Peters, which was an easy driving distance from the foundation's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Bainum provides teachers with ongoing support

Slaughter would support the teachers as they worked through the framework. She could also make changes to it based on what she learned as it was being tested. Because of her background in special education, she had a particular expertise in working with teachers to adapt the framework to students with different learning needs and styles.

On September 4, 2014, Bainum and G.E. Peters completed a formal agreement to pilot the Instructional Framework for one year as part of an expected three-year initiative. The pilot would take place in kindergarten, third grade and sixth grade. The document outlined a number of

expectations and deliverables for the school, including ensuring that participating teachers would meet with Slaughter for a minimum of one hour a week.

G.E. Peters administrators and pilot teachers were expected to meet with Bainum staff quarterly. In addition, the agreement called for pilot teachers to submit sample lesson plans demonstrating how they used the Instructional Framework in their teaching, participate in a number of activities to provide feedback about the pilot, and complete end-of-unit surveys, among other tasks.

Bainum would provide \$15,000 for the school year to pay for substitutes to cover the classrooms while teachers met with Slaughter and completed other tasks related to the pilot. For the time teachers spent working on the Instructional Framework, they received a letter they could use toward their continuing education unit (CEU) requirements for teacher certification or recertification.

To kick off the project, Soper and Slaughter met with the participating teachers in August — about a week before school started. The Bainum staff explained what the framework was, why it was written and their goals, and answered questions from the teachers. They also provided the teachers with the framework in advance.

Participating teachers interviewed uniformly said that they were excited about piloting the Instructional Framework and enjoyed working with Slaughter, and named specific ways that the framework helped them in their teaching. Several also said they wished they had more notice to prepare for using the framework, and some wished they'd been asked if they wanted to participate in the pilot, since they were the ones who would carry it out. Most also noted that they relished opportunities to learn new practices or approaches, which is not the case with all teachers.

Teachers wished for more notice about and input into the pilot

Myrna James, who was a third-grade teacher at G.E. Peters with 10 years of experience, said that she was enthusiastic about the pilot project because she is always happy to learn something that will make her a better teacher. An initial challenge for James was that she did not learn about the plan to pilot the framework until close to the beginning of the school year. As she is someone who likes to be organized and plan out her school year well in advance, the short notice added some anxiety to the start of the school year. How would she incorporate the framework with the planning she had already done for the school year? She found that at times she had to cancel plans with Slaughter because they conflicted with others already on the calendar.

"I didn't mind [being presented with this project], but I wish that the teachers who were selected had a little more say in it," James said. "Because a lot of times when you have a say in what's happening, it's easier for you to buy in."

James said she worried that she might be judged by Slaughter for not being able to follow the framework perfectly. Instead, she found a supportive ally in Slaughter who worked alongside her every step of the way. The help included Slaughter providing lesson seeds for planning so James did not have to create a lesson from scratch. If James had a different idea than

Slaughter for a particular lesson, she said, Slaughter supported her rather than insisting that the framework, which was still evolving, had to be carried out in a prescriptive way.

“I didn’t feel like I had to do the planning on my own or I had to sit up at night to make sure I had everything done,” James said. “Ginger was there. She did her best to see what resources she could find to support me.”

James also appreciated the check-in sessions she had with Slaughter to talk about what went well and what did not go well in a particular lesson, especially ones that James had been excited about that had fallen flat. Having Slaughter as a sounding board and getting her perspectives made James feel like she had a real partner in this pilot, she said.

Slaughter traveled to the school to meet with each teacher weekly or — in the beginning — twice a week as they started to work through the framework. During the meetings, Slaughter and the teachers reviewed the framework, Slaughter went through different aspects of it such as using objectives and essential questions, and teachers talked about their plans for the coming week.

Teachers said that they felt like collaborators with Slaughter in co-creating this still-new approach. They would tell Slaughter what worked and what didn’t, and she would revise the units accordingly. The teachers also appreciated Slaughter’s encouragement and coaching on how to implement this new-to-many-of-them approach. Slaughter said that was a deliberate decision on her part.

“The approach I took at G.E. Peters was to be more of an observer and learner than a coach,” Slaughter said. “I was trying to learn what parts of the framework were familiar to them and what parts needed more explanation, and in general to observe and hear what they felt worked and what could be improved.”

A partnership with Bainum in the pilot

LaKeisha Dickerson, a sixth-grade teacher at G.E. Peters, said she appreciated how much she felt like a partner in the pilot.

“We were helping create [the framework],” Dickerson said. “I felt like we were working together. I never felt like I was being critiqued. I loved being part of the process and helping Bainum improve the framework. I felt like they were doing something good. They were making it rigorous and teacher-friendly. And that was important because right now, in some schools, teachers are doing it on their own. Something like this would make it easier for us in the classroom.”

Dickerson and others noted that they valued the essential question or big idea, which is posed at the start of each unit and was something she and other teachers said they had never done before. The essential question helps students (and teachers) see the goal they need to meet for what they are learning. One example is, “How does learning about others help you learn about yourself?” Having the essential question articulated makes the lessons relevant for students and helps engage them in their learning, she said.

Slaughter collected data throughout the process, and even before the project she started to gauge any changes in the students' performances. She also did surveys before and after each nine-week unit with the teachers to see what worked for them, what didn't and what aspects of the framework they found most useful. Slaughter worked all this feedback into revising the framework at the different grade levels.

For Gladys Guerrero, the framework helped with the difficult transition from teaching middle school to teaching kindergarten. Guerrero said that her first year as a kindergarten teacher was hard; she had little idea of how to teach such young students. In her second year, she was part of the pilot project and the framework provided her with the guidance she needed. It helped her integrate themes and standards in her teaching, which she had struggled with. She also found the framework easy to use and that it simplified her planning time and gave her ideas about how to teach the standards while also allowing for her creativity in teaching.

As a relatively new teacher to this age group, she found another benefit. "It helped with the classroom management because the kids were engaged," Guerrero said. "You could hear them talking at recess about what they learned today. We were doing *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* book, and we talked about it and the style of art. The kids then came up with their own book following that style. Parents were happier because they saw the kids were learning. I think it had a great impact. It made my teaching enjoyable. It helped me become a great teacher and had a great impact on the atmosphere at the school."

The Instructional Framework helped engage students

As an example of student engagement, Guerrero pointed to one of her students who had ADHD, was quite hyperactive and was smart. He could not sit still. The young boy often screamed when he did not get his way. But the framework's structure that included the themes and objectives at the start of each lesson gave the student a road map for what to expect.

"He was so engaged with it," Guerrero said. "Since he knew what was coming, it helped him plan out his day. This is what the day is going to look like. It helped him have less of an outburst. He liked to know [what to expect] even though he was 5 years old."

She added, "I loved the power [the Instructional Framework] gave me to be a better teacher. The kids loved it. They loved the ownership they received of their learning. Five years on they still want to know what's happening [by using aspects like essential questions]. They love surprises but not with learning. I really love how engaged they were, how they looked forward to reading time, especially the boys, who usually hate reading. They would ask 'what book are we reading today?' and they'd know the essential question. I loved the power it gave my students."

Ebony Holland, another teacher who participated in the pilot, also noted how the framework helped her teaching. She said that the reading part of the curriculum, particularly the guided reading, was especially helpful. While she had used guided reading in the past, the framework broke it down for her, including how to differentiate with students at different reading levels.

"If I just had a regular teacher's edition book, I would be teaching straight from there and not even paying attention to the kids who were above or below average," Holland said. "With the

Instructional Framework I was able to figure out what levels the kids were on because I had to test them beforehand.”

While Slaughter was finding some early takeaways from the teachers, challenges began to emerge as well. One of the expectations from the agreement between Bainum and G.E. Peters was that the school administration would help coordinate collaborative planning sessions so that they would not interfere with other scheduled events. However, a number of times Slaughter showed up to the school only to find that the teachers were engaged in other activities on the school calendar. One teacher said that early on they had no substitutes to provide classroom coverage while they met with Slaughter. Soper noted that the school did not sign and send in the agreement until November 14, 2014, which delayed payment for the substitutes.

Struggling to get the attention of the principal

While the principal seemed initially enthusiastic about the Instructional Framework, once the foundation began to implement it at the school, he was much more detached, Bainum staff said. He rarely attended the collective meetings with the teachers. Without his presence, it was difficult for the foundation and the school to have the same commitment to and understanding about the Instructional Framework and how it was evolving. His support was critical, Bainum staff said, and without it the pilot did not rise to the importance it needed to.

Added Soper, “Teachers articulated that they were unclear about the expectations from the school. ... It felt like the principal was saying ‘you guys got it, you don’t need me.’”

The teachers, however, said that they felt fully supported by their principal in this work.

After the first year, the initial data Slaughter collected looked promising, including student scores in English/Language Arts. Slaughter made changes to the framework based on the teachers’ feedback, including providing more guidance with suggested standards for each week. The foundation and G.E. Peters signed an agreement for a second year of piloting, this time to implement the framework in grades one and four.

However, during the 2015/2016 school year, Slaughter and Bainum continued to struggle to get the attention of the school principal. Learning from their experience in the first year, Slaughter said, they had tried to arrange meetings far in advance with teachers, but it was hard to get them on the calendar because of other, schoolwide priorities.

“We would have trainings where we expected the principal to be there and then find out he couldn’t go,” Slaughter said. “We really needed him there to show he was on board and committed to the framework. I felt like we [the foundation and the principal] weren’t showing up as ‘partners.’”

Slaughter added that the pilot was an opportunity to learn what conditions would help sustain the work and partnership. Because those conditions were not already fleshed out, it was an ongoing challenge to identify a cadence of what the principal’s involvement should look like and then adjust it due to unforeseen circumstances.

At the same time, Slaughter continued to receive positive feedback from the teachers on the framework, which gave her and the foundation team hope that they were onto something useful for Seventh-day Adventist schools. At the end of the two-year pilot, Bainum reported a number

of results from data collected through online surveys and in-person teacher interviews of the five piloting teachers. They included:

- Students' overall vocabulary had increased.
- Students were engaged, took more ownership of their learning, and were collaborating and communicating more than before.
- Teachers reported the framework provided a clear focus for using the standards to plan instruction and assess students' learning.

Bainum had planned to do a third year of piloting with G.E. Peters, adding second and fifth grade in the final year. But Bainum had continually asked the G.E. Peters administration to provide time for new teachers to familiarize themselves with the framework well in advance of the school year. Slaughter was never able to arrange that.

Trouble securing support from the Allegheny East Conference

Slaughter had also met with Allegheny East conference's new curriculum coordinator with the hope that the coordinator could take over implementation of the Instructional Framework at G.E. Peters and eventually at other schools in the conference. If Bainum could get the conference behind them, it would be a big help in providing accountability for expectations of implementing the framework with fidelity, Soper said.

According to Slaughter, she met with the new curriculum coordinator and the principal in early August 2016 to clearly define each of their roles and responsibilities related to the Instructional Framework pilot prior to the new school year. She emailed a roles and responsibilities chart the next day and asked for feedback by the following week. Despite several requests to the curriculum coordinator and principal, the chart was not returned until *after* the school year had started in late August. A number of unsuccessful attempts followed to schedule an in-person meeting with the curriculum coordinator. Foundation staff eventually had a phone conversation with the curriculum coordinator in October 2016 — two months after the school year started. At this point, it was too late in the school year to set up the pilot for success, Slaughter said.

Soper agreed. She sent an email to the principal telling him that Bainum would not pilot grades two and five, based on lessons they had learned from earlier years and the fact that the school year was already well underway. She said that Slaughter would provide support to teachers previously trained in the framework if they needed it.

Soper also said that she and Slaughter would work with the Allegheny East superintendent and curriculum coordinator to implement the framework conferencewide as well as continue the implementation at G.E. Peters in the 2017/2018 school year.

As it turned out, nothing came of the work with Allegheny East. The curriculum coordinator was focused on other priorities. The superintendent, who had been a champion of the framework, was replaced by the principal of G.E. Peters. Because he had shown little interest in promoting the Instructional Framework, foundation staff decided to no longer pursue working with the conference.

Pilot project ends, leaving some teachers confused

The pilot project was over.

“It ended because we were feeling we really weren’t getting the full involvement from the principal that we needed. It wasn’t a partnership in the way we envisioned. But we did learn a lot from the pilot,” Slaughter said. “The teachers gave us some great feedback on the documents.”

Daniels added that the implementation was hit and miss with the teachers because of the inconsistent support of the school administration.

None of the G.E. Peters teachers interviewed could recall hearing that the pilot project was ending. They just remember it fading away. Reflecting back, all said it would have been helpful to hear directly from the foundation that the pilot was finished and to know what came of their work on the project.

“It just felt like they dropped us,” Guerrero said. “They used to come a lot and wanted our opinion. And poof, they disappeared. It was a very abrupt exit.”

She said it would have been beneficial to have a clear sense of the beginning and the end of the project and how long it was expected to last, and to have a final meeting at the end including an acknowledgment of the work the teachers had done in the pilot.

According to Slaughter, she and her foundation colleagues believed that Dent, the Superintendent, would communicate to G.E. Peters’ teachers that the foundation would no longer be coming to the school. But the foundation was not copied on any communication from Dent to the school.

Demonstration Site — Creation Village World School

At the same time foundation staff saw that the Instructional Framework was not getting the buy-in it needed at the Allegheny East conference, they learned about a new and potentially quite promising opportunity in Florida.

In 2013, Derek and Nalani Cummings opened Creation Village World School, an early childhood center that would add one grade a year through 12th grade. Derek is the son of Desmond (Des) Cummings Jr., a well-known Seventh-day Adventist who served as executive vice president for AdventHealth, the second-largest admitting hospital in the U.S. Derek Cummings’ background was in business, not education, and he was eager for help in providing a tested framework for the still-developing school that had not yet chosen a curriculum as it began to develop an elementary school with kindergarten as its initial grade. Soper said she saw Creation Village World School as a chance to move forward with the Instructional Framework with an Adventist-centered school that was not part of the Adventist system.

A promising new demonstration site

Creation Village World School is in Celebration, Florida, a planned community near Disney World, and minutes away from Celebration Health, a hospital developed by Des Cummings.

That hospital has served as a demonstration model for health care professionals in the United States and around the world.

In 2016, the Bainum Family Foundation was embarking on a new focus on early childhood education. As part of that work, Daniels came in contact with Des Cummings, who mentioned the work of his son and daughter-in-law at Creation Village World School, which included a well-established preschool. In further meetings, Daniels, Slaughter and other foundation staff met with Derek Cummings and others at Creation Village World School to see whether the school might be a fit as a demonstration model for the Instructional Framework. After additional meetings, Bainum and Creation Village World School reached an agreement to have the school serve as a demonstration model.

Another appeal of Creation Village World School for the Bainum Family Foundation was that it was backed by recognized members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, which could give the Instructional Framework needed credibility.

“We thought it would be a better fit than G.E. Peters because [Creation Village World School] had better backing as it relates to funding, and we perceived that it had a better administration,” Daniels said. “In terms of stability, in terms of what seemed like control and buy-in and really a focus on curriculum at school, in terms of willingness to hire individuals that could carry on the work, it was a place that we felt like if we could get it going there, they’re going to keep it going even long past when Bainum is no longer funding it.”

For his part, Cummings was eager for Creation Village World School to serve as a demonstration site, attracting educators from around the country, much like Celebration Health does for health providers. He pointed out that Orlando is one of the top five destinations in the world and the No. 1 destination for educational conferences. A central goal of Creation Village World School was to be a demonstration site for Christian, whole-child education and development, he noted.

The Instructional Framework fills a need at the new school

The Instructional Framework could provide both the structure and the flexibility that this new school needed as it built out its grades, Cummings noted. He said initially he and other Creation Village World School administrators thought they could start with English/Language Arts and then expand the framework to math and science. Eventually, the framework could be scaled to the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to help bring excellence to its educational programs, using Creation Village World School as a living laboratory, Cummings noted.

Cummings also noted that as a new and still-small school, Creation Village World School did not have professional learning communities of teachers who could come together to do shared planning and ensure that students were progressing from grade to grade.

“Within our school, we just have one grade per level. How do you collaborate? Are you integrating correct assessment data?” Cummings asked. “How are you providing feedback to the students — all the things that the Instructional Framework has wrapped into it. It was something that was very beneficial to our school to put in place so that we can move beyond

just having teachers going in, doing their day, but not necessarily connecting to something larger that would be more schoolwide.”

His wife, Nalani Cummings, who serves as head of mission for the school, added that the appeal of working with the foundation and the Instructional Framework was, as a new school, to show families in their community that the students would be getting an excellent education that used standards to challenge them. Because of the way the Instructional Framework was structured, parents would be able to see their children’s growth through the use of assessments, she added.

“One thing that was appealing was they were going to grow their school one grade each year and didn’t have a curriculum around English/Language Arts,” Soper said. “Incrementally rolling the framework out seemed like it would be more manageable. And Creation Village World School really wanted to be a model — a center for excellence. It had visions for being a training program.”

2017/2018 school year — first year

Starting in January 2017, foundation staff and Creation Village World School staff began working together to set the stage to launch the first year of the demonstration project with the 2017/2018 school year.

One of Slaughter’s takeaways from the G.E. Peters experience was that participating teachers needed to be brought on board much earlier than they had been — ideally around January. That would give teachers plenty of time to get introduced to the framework and incorporate it into their plans for the coming year. However, because the foundation staff began serious discussions with Creation Village World School leaders around January, Slaughter was unable to realize that goal. Slaughter and Soper were able to provide a multiday orientation to teachers that summer.

Learning from the pilot project

Initially, the partnership was envisioned as one that was mutually beneficial to both the foundation and Creation Village World School and, as such, involved no financial support from the foundation. The foundation and Creation Village World School did, however, formalize expectations through a detailed memorandum of understanding (MOU). Some of the expectations came from what the foundation had learned from its experience at G.E. Peters. For example, the foundation asked Creation Village World School to designate a site liaison to coordinate with foundation staff and ensure that teachers completed tasks related to the Instructional Framework implementation and data collection.

Among the other stated expectations was that each teacher implementing the Instructional Framework would be available to meet with a foundation representative (Slaughter in the beginning) for a minimum of 90 uninterrupted minutes a week. Teachers would receive an additional three hours of time to plan, reflect and provide data connected to the Instructional Framework. This additional time reflected the fact that the Instructional Framework was moving to a new, more formalized phase and would require more of the teachers’ time than it had in the pilot project. In order for Creation Village World School to become a demonstration site, it was

necessary to build any foundational background knowledge needed to implement the framework, which Slaughter had learned takes time.

Recently appointed to her position, Daphne Razon, Dean of Academics, took on the role of site liaison along with other responsibilities. Razon had started at Creation Village World School as its first kindergarten teacher. She described her role as seeing what was needed to implement the framework at the school. That included making sure teachers understood the expectations around the framework, overseeing purchases for the framework, participating in weekly coaching calls with Slaughter, coordinating in-person trainings and learning the framework herself.

Razon, who had previewed the framework in the spring of 2017, was an enthusiastic supporter of it, seeing it as providing crucial needed structure for its curriculum to the still-new school.

“[The Instructional Framework] was a breath of fresh air,” Razon said. “It was this standards-based approach that was cohesive throughout all the grades. It was something our school desperately needed at the time. I knew that we needed that sort of guidance, that framework as we continued to grow with other grades. We were a very new school, so we didn’t have a lot of the structures in place that the other schools did.”

On-site liaison moves away

In June 2017, just as Slaughter was beginning to train Creation Village World School teachers in the Instructional Framework and before the school year had begun, Razon moved out of state to attend to family matters, eventually settling in California. Cummings asked her to continue working as a consultant, a job he felt she could do remotely, and oversee the Instructional Framework.

Razon continued to assist with the implementation of the framework, but she was no longer employed full time at the school to provide the eyes on the ground for Slaughter. This was the scenario that the foundation had hoped to avoid, based on what they learned from their experience with G.E. Peters. They felt it was critical for someone to be physically present at Creation Village World School to work with the teachers, make sure they were getting what they needed and handle all the necessary administrative logistics.

For Slaughter, this unexpected change at the start of the demonstration project was unnerving. She felt strongly (and Razon agreed) that for this work to be successful, there needed to be an on-site presence at Creation Village World School. However, Cummings said he felt sure Razon could manage the work remotely, Slaughter recalled.

“That should have been a red flag for me,” Slaughter said. “We had a plan. Daphne was going to be the on-site person. And then we were told that wasn’t happening and there were no plans to replace her with someone else. So while we were trying to apply lessons learned from the pilot to set us up for success, we hit a major roadblock right away that I knew was going to cause problems. But we just tried to make it work.”

Razon and Slaughter tried to make it work that first year by both visiting the school frequently for on-site meetings and working closely virtually. Slaughter traveled to Creation Village World

School about every six weeks. She and Razon spoke almost daily, which was a welcome change for Slaughter after her experience at G.E. Peters.

During the 2017/2018 school year, Slaughter worked with Creation Village World School to implement the framework with four teachers for kindergarten, first grade and second grade (one teacher worked in a small third-grade classroom that was often combined with second grade).

Gemma Wise-Beaumont, a teacher with 10 years of experience who taught second grade at Creation Village World School, was one of the first teachers to work with Slaughter and the Instructional Framework.

Teachers find the Instructional Framework unexpectedly time-consuming

Wise-Beaumont, who had just started working at Creation Village World School, said that she appreciated the framework for guiding her because the school did not have a curriculum at the time. And even though she had a decade of experience, she valued having someone like Slaughter to bounce ideas off and collaborate with.

She also remembered that it took a lot of time to prepare for one subject area — English/Language Arts — and the fact that all that preparation could not be used for math and science was a negative attribute of the framework. But she added that once she got the hang of the process, she felt well equipped to teach her lessons.

“The planning time was hours and hours and hours,” Wise-Beaumont said. “We had two weekly calls, and it was about four and a half hours of planning for just that one subject. Not only did you have to plan it, but you then would have to go out and find your materials, including assessments. That was time-consuming but beneficial in the sense that you would be driving your own classroom, where you knew your individual students. Because you are choosing things that you know your students will like, they did have a high interest in that matter. I presented it in a very enthusiastic way because I’m invested. When you make something and it’s your own, you take pride in it.”

Jessica Llewellyn, who was teaching kindergarten at Creation Village World School, was also one of the initial teachers to implement the Instructional Framework. She said that she liked parts of the framework such as the essential questions and how the standards were paired with themes for each unit. But it also felt overwhelming and time consuming to do the planning. Llewellyn noted that because it was a framework and not a curriculum at the still-new school, she had to spend additional time looking for resources and making lesson plans — after she completed her planning for the Instructional Framework.

She also found the calls with Slaughter discouraging at times.

“The framework did have a lot of pros, like the themes and the standards and the lesson seeds,” Llewellyn said. “The biggest part for me that I had a hard time with was the coaching calls. Sometimes I felt like I would bring in ideas or just some thoughts to the coaching calls. But then I came out of the meeting feeling like ‘well, those ideas weren’t good. [Ginger] wants me to do this instead.’ So sometimes I would come out of the calls feeling a bit defeated. But I mean

nothing against Ginger. It's just some personalities are hard to mesh when you don't know someone that well."

Eventually, Llewellyn began having her coaching calls with Razon.

Taking a more hands-on approach than in the pilot

Slaughter said that at the start of her work with Creation Village World School, she used a similar light touch as she had at G.E. Peters. But since this new partnership was about making the school a demonstration site, her role had shifted to training teachers so they would apply the Instructional Framework with fidelity from class-to-class. It quickly became apparent that some teachers needed more in-depth coaching, and she began to take a more hands-on approach.

Nalani Cummings remembered that one of the other teachers did not like the framework at all and was also overwhelmed by it, describing it as going back to college, she recalled. For her part, Cummings was not particularly concerned because Razon, the head of academics, was such a believer in the framework.

By April 2018, Derek Cummings began looking to hire an on-site administrator at Creation Village World School. Through his connection with the Bainum Family Foundation, he met and hired Chris Simons as dean of the lower school, who at the time was a vice principal at a Seventh-day Adventist School in Maryland. Razon would continue to provide help with implementing the Instructional Framework and helped train Simons in his new role at Creation Village World School.

As the school grew and some teachers left, three new teachers joined Creation Village World School to start the following school year.

2018/2019 — second year of implementation

At the start of the second year of implementation, the school was undergoing a number of changes, all of which had an impact on the rollout of the Instructional Framework as well as the direction of the school. Derek and Nalani Cummings went out of the country in October to explore the possibility of the school becoming an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, a move that could provide the school needed accreditation and entice parents interested in its promotion of independent thinking and problem-solving. Slaughter was working with a new person as her contact and an almost entirely new set of teachers.

While Simons was scrambling to learn his new roles, Slaughter began working with the new teachers. Complicating her work was turnover from the first year. Of the four teachers Slaughter had trained on the Instructional Framework, only Wise-Beaumont remained as a full-time instructor. The new teachers were Amy Wood, Liz Joiner, Tiffany Purdie and Kristin Loboda, implementing, respectively, the kindergarten and first-, third- and fourth-grade Instructional Framework.

New dean surprised to learn of responsibilities with the Instructional Framework

Meanwhile, Simons quickly found himself having to learn the job from Razon and Slaughter. Simons said he thought he had been hired to serve in a role similar to a principal but upon

arriving learned that he had major responsibilities for overseeing the Instructional Framework. He said he was not aware of those responsibilities when he took the job but also noted he could have misunderstood. In any case, initially he was not spending much time on the framework.

“[When I was hired] it was not clear to me to what degree I would be supporting the Instructional Framework while I was there,” Simons said. “I certainly wasn’t doing much in the beginning. Toward the middle of the school year, it became much clearer what was needed from my end, and that was as a support or a facilitator on-site to help with guidance, with the teachers, and capturing data to provide to Ginger. [But] it wasn’t what I saw myself doing when I was hired. So that became somewhat of a conflict for me. It was my frustration with, am I missing something, or was something not being communicated clearly?”

After the first few months, Simons’ work became divided between overseeing the school and getting into minute details of providing an onsite presence for the demonstration project, including gathering data on the implementation of the framework and videotaping teachers applying it in the classroom.

At the start of the school year, the Bainum Family Foundation signed a second, separate agreement with Creation Village World School. In this contract, the foundation agreed to provide Creation Village World School with \$1.5 million that would support 40% of construction costs of a new school building. Foundation leadership saw supporting the development of the school building as assisting in their goal for Creation Village World School to serve as a demonstration for the Instructional Framework.

Foundation helps fund new building at Creation Village World School

The contract stated that the foundation would provide technical assistance and recommendations related to the design and layout of the classroom environments throughout the construction process. It also stated that Creation Village World School would continue to implement the Instructional Framework, with specific deliverables included. Among them were that Creation Village World School would hire reflective teachers committed to being continuous learners and delivering holistic standards-based instruction.

Slaughter had been part of the interviewing process to hire Wood, Joiner, Purdie and Loboda. She was able to explain the Instructional Framework to them, explain its requirements for teachers, and help ensure these teachers had the openness and willingness to get trained on this approach. This second year of implementation, Slaughter was also able to start working with the teachers early in the summer to give them more time to become familiar with the framework. The new teachers received a survey to fill out in May and a PowerPoint introducing the Instructional Framework, and participated in an in-person meeting before they left for summer vacation. Foundation staff met again for a week of intensive introduction to the framework in July.

‘It’s worth the hard work’

Like many of the teachers in the first year of implementation, Purdie, who started teaching third grade at Creation Village World School that year, remembered the framework feeling completely overwhelming at first. Coming from public school, she would teach one standard at a time, while with the framework she had to learn backward planning; how to teach multiple standards in one

lesson, such as reading and speaking; take the standards and turn them into “I Cans” and learning targets; practice reflecting on the lessons; and document along the way how her students were doing.

For Purdie and other teachers coming to Creation Village World School that year, even though they had been prepped about the Instructional Framework, it turned out to be unexpectedly hard and time-consuming but, in the end, worthwhile because they felt it made them better teachers. But the process was often laborious.

“My very first year, I would stay up every night until 10 o’clock lesson planning,” Purdie said. “Every teacher was like that. I remembered feeling very overwhelmed. It was a lot — a lot to learn. But then I remember the following year telling new teachers, once you get it, you will love it. So it’s worth the hard work.”

For Joiner, who also started teaching at Creation Village World School that year, the framework was useful in a number of ways, including the essential questions, which she said she always displayed and used as introductions to her classroom’s lessons and units. The framework also gave her ideas for different pre-assessments that she had not used before, lesson ideas to start with more hands-on activities, and a number of helpful resources.

Like Llewelyn, she found the coaching sessions with Slaughter challenging at times.

“I didn’t feel like I was writing the lesson plans for myself; I felt like I was writing them to be able to communicate what I was teaching with somebody else who wasn’t in the classroom,” she said. “And I really did love Ginger. Maybe that’s her way of understanding what we wanted to teach. But it felt like, what are we doing this for right now? Is it for you to understand our lesson plans or for us to write this out? So I think a lot of teachers were feeling a little defeated or frustrated with that. It did feel like there was a lot riding on it, and maybe that’s why we needed to be so in-depth with our lesson plans, because they wanted to use them for demonstrations.”

For her part, Slaughter said that she did not love taking on such a hands-on role with the Instructional Framework, but she felt she had little choice. No one at Creation Village World School, at least at the beginning of the year, appeared to be setting expectations for what the teachers should be doing with the framework.

“I was trying to help them set up a regular routine for the teachers learning and applying the best practices in the framework, but I needed a consistent on-site person to oversee these efforts. With all the turnover, this was a constant challenge,” she said.

A new direction for Creation Village World School

Derek Cummings returned from his trip in the fall of 2018 enthusiastic about the possibility of becoming an IB school. To foundation staff, it felt like his attention was already shifting away from the framework just one year into the implementation.

But when they brought up their concerns, Cummings insisted that he and the school were committed to serving as the Instructional Framework demonstration site.

For Cummings, the new IB focus was an important step forward for the school.

“We needed to get accreditation and IB seemed to be the best fit,” Cummings said. “I started looking at it seriously in 2018. I like the holistic focus of IB. It’s more focused on outcomes than lesson plans. [The Instructional Framework] is all built around standards — Maryland standards for Language Arts. That’s not bad, but it can be too granular, whereas IB has strands of learning that give you a broader ability to be able to effect and apply learning across disciplines.”

Wise-Beaumont concurred. “The thing is we needed to be accredited, and the framework wasn’t giving us accreditation. When you’re accredited, you get more interest and more families. But Ginger almost felt like we were putting the framework to the side. But ultimately that’s what we needed to be able to grow. So there was a breakdown of communication for sure [between the foundation and Creation Village World School].”

In early 2019, after Cummings had returned from his overseas trip, he and Simons began to have conflicts over the direction of the school and other matters. Cummings brought in a longtime educator to mentor Simons on being a principal.

A tool that focuses on best practices

At around the same time, Slaughter, with input from Razon, Simons, Soper and other foundation and Creation Village World School staff, began collaborating with a research consultant on developing a new tool that could clearly and succinctly lay out the best practices for teachers embedded within the Instructional Framework. This separate document — a rubric — could provide an overview and context that could provide a grounding for teachers as they learned the Instructional Framework for their individual grades.

The rubric was an evolution of the work Slaughter had been doing on the Instructional Framework for years. Woven into the framework are a series of instructional best practices in teaching that Slaughter knew from her research, education and experience as a classroom teacher. They included aspects like teachers taking the time to actively reflect on their practice, doing backward planning (i.e., starting with the end goal and working backward to meet it), and explaining the context of their teaching to students. These were the indicators that Slaughter, school administrators and teachers themselves would be looking for in measuring teachers’ progress toward implementing and mastering the Instructional Framework’s best practices.

While Slaughter had a short checklist of these best practices, over time, as she continued to refine her approach, she realized it would be helpful to teachers, administrators, coaches and visiting teachers to have a more fully developed rubric that was backed by research. Such a rubric could provide observers with more details and objective evidence of what it means for teachers to meet each of these best practices in all grade levels. The rubric could also provide consistent expectations and understandings among teachers who came to their positions with varying backgrounds and degrees of understanding about these best practices, Slaughter said.

“The rubric lays out these foundational best practices, and if you want to be the best you can be in teaching, you want to learn how to apply all of them simultaneously,” Slaughter said. “If you

understand them, it's going to make it a lot easier to actually use the Instructional Framework grade-level documents.”

The eventual rubric included the following eight indicators of best practices:

1. Teachers are actively reflecting on their practice.
2. Teachers use backward planning addressing multiple standards.
3. Teachers create individual lesson objectives that guide students toward mastering the larger standards.
4. Teachers differentiate lessons by applying strategies that support students' learning needs and styles.
5. Teachers explain, and students understand, the context for learning.
6. Teachers create, monitor and use assessments during planning and instruction.
7. Teachers apply an understanding of the shifts in English/Language Arts/literacy instruction within the Common Core.
8. Teachers promote students' real-world connection and application.

Additionally, it provided details on attributes for each indicator, a scale of 1 to 4 to measure varying degrees of reaching those practices, and specific “look-fors” to observe in the classroom.

Teachers begin to embrace the Instructional Framework (IF)

Putting together the rubric felt like another important step toward the implementation of the Instructional Framework for foundation staff. In addition, by the end of the school year, three more teachers — Joiner, Purdie and Loboda — had weathered the challenges of learning the framework and were largely enthusiastic about it.

“The second year, I was definitely more confident and knew what I was doing,” Purdie said. “I was able to do more of the model lessons that Ginger taught me. I remember some of my kids saying, ‘wow, this is really fun.’ I learned how to give my kids ownership of their learning. And so they were the ones talking, using the little sentence stems, and discussing in groups in doing the learning. And that was a huge shift for me in the framework.”

She noted that her students would go into their reading study groups and ask each other questions.

“It was so cool to watch them grow as readers and be respectful of one another,” she said.

At the same time, by the end of the school year in spring 2019, Simons was trained on the Instructional Framework and was able to oversee the expectations from a place of authority that Slaughter said they'd needed since the inception of the demonstration project in August 2017.

“I think having someone — and in this case, that someone being me — walk through and clearly communicate the expectations and needs that Ginger had, gave the teachers direction,” Simons said. “Some of them responded well to it; others struggled. But I think that is what was needed and requested from Ginger, and it certainly made teachers stronger in their pedagogy. There were things that needed to be in place to set an equal playing field for all students. So equity was a big thing.”

As an example of equity, Simons said, sometimes teachers will not see the need for writing out the essential question for every lesson. But students who are visual learners need to see the question on the board, and it makes a big difference for them in their learning. He also said he saw the Instructional Framework making a difference in the classrooms at Creation Village World School. Simons said that the framework offered so many choices for reading, which helped students who did not start with a love of reading become avid readers.

“Not everybody’s going to be interested in a specific type of book, so when you have varying vehicles in which they can receive that content, it increases engagement,” Simons said. “And engagement increases retention, and retention better prepares a student for life outside of the school.”

He added, “I think [the Instructional Framework] also helps create routines. And studies provide that when students follow a routine throughout the day, learning is increased, and engagement is increased because they understand what’s expected of them.”

Gaining traction and more changes at Creation Village World School

Toward the end of the second year of implementation of the Instructional Framework, the work was gaining its footing with the addition of the newly created Instructional Framework Rubric. Creation Village World School teachers and Simons had a clearer understanding of the best practices in the Instructional Framework and how they could use coaching and planning times more effectively. The dean was articulating and enforcing expectations with the teachers for implementing the framework.

But then, after continued frustrations between Derek Cummings and Simons, Simons left the school and returned to Maryland. The educator who had been brought on to mentor him took over as dean. This was another new person coming in who needed to be brought up to speed on the Instructional Framework demonstration.

In May 2019, before the new school year, Slaughter said she spent time with the new dean explaining what they needed from her for the framework to be successful. That leadership included participating in meetings, communicating and overseeing expectations to teachers, and hiring teachers who understood the approach and the commitment required to implement the Instructional Framework. She felt that the dean was supportive — enthusiastic even — and on board.

Teachers appreciated professional development opportunities

To further deepen teachers’ knowledge, the foundation also began providing funding for professional development for teachers and administrative staff. That funding included support for out-of-state professional conferences to help strengthen their work with the Instructional Framework. One such conference took place in the summer of 2019 around standards-based assessments. Slaughter said that they planned to focus on creating and aligning assessments to standards — one of the IF Rubric’s indicators — the following school year, because they realized from working closely with the teachers that that was an area where they all could use more support.

The professional development funds also supported an initiative for teachers to receive three CEU credits toward teaching recertification from Bowie State University for their participation in the Instructional Framework implementation. The requirements were the work that the teachers were already doing with the Instructional Framework, including preparing a lesson plan that showed their understanding and application of the eight indicators in the IF Rubric. The idea was to provide a reward for teachers who were working hard on the implementation. It could also serve as an incentive for other teachers if the framework was rolled out to other schools.

“We always felt like we were held to a higher professionalism with Bainum because they would take us to these amazing conferences,” Purdie said. “It was just really nice to be valued as an educator; we felt really important and like our job really mattered. I felt like they supported teachers 100% by the coaching, the professional development and offering the binder of all this framework information.”

2019/2020 school year — third year

In the framework’s third year of implementation at Creation Village World School, the school was undergoing a fresh round of changes. It had a new dean and four new teachers.

In addition, at the foundation’s request — and with financial backing — the school had hired Wise-Beaumont as the full-time Instructional Framework Coordinator — at least it was the foundation’s understanding that the role would be full time. Derek Cummings said it was always envisaged as a part-time position. Foundation staff thought they finally had someone on-site who could be fully dedicated to overseeing the implementation of the Instructional Framework. Under the three-year agreement, the foundation would pay 100% of the salary and benefits for the first year, 70% for year two and 50% for year three.

While having Wise-Beaumont as the full-time Instructional Framework Coordinator at Creation Village World School felt like a big and positive turning point for the demonstration, the landscape soon shifted once again.

First, contrary to the foundation’s agreement with the school, Slaughter had not been part of the interview process with any of the new teachers to help gauge whether they were the right fit for this approach to teaching. She had specifically expressed concerns about one teacher under consideration who was later hired. Cummings said that Bainum was involved in preparing interview questions but for legal reasons Slaughter could not be part of the interviews themselves.

Outcry from teachers leads to scaling back of Instructional Framework requirements

Then in August, just as the school year was beginning, Cummings wrote to Slaughter. He had been hearing concerns from the new teachers about the time and requirements of implementing the framework. The concerns were partly about the new obligations that teachers had to take on, much more than when the Instructional Framework began at Creation Village World School.

At the start of the Instructional Framework implementation in 2017, participating Creation Village World School teachers had responsibility for planning and teaching English/Language Arts only.

Other teachers came in and taught math and science. That left them with more time to focus on the Instructional Framework.

But Creation Village World School had decided to become an IB school. One of the requirements to be an IB school was that the grade-level teachers also provide instruction on science and math. Cummings expressed to Slaughter that the school had focused its onboarding of the new teachers on the Instructional Framework, which left little time for the other subjects. He added that the school allocated over 80% of teacher planning to English/Language Arts.

Cummings noted that teachers were vocal and clear in saying that the amount of time required to plan and the level of detail of the English/Language Arts plans were difficult to sustain. As a response to their concerns, he suggested that one coaching call per week rather than the planned two would be a more effective use of teachers' time. He also suggested creating professional learning communities to plan between grades and subjects. Purdie also remembers that some of the veteran teachers who came in began asking for a curriculum to go along with the framework.

Reflecting on the experience of the Instructional Framework, Cummings said, "It was a much more radical change than I think anyone was ready for and accustomed to. I don't think we realized how much it would change our team and how much it would change our organization. It was financially hard, and we couldn't figure out how to scale it. It's a very intense process that requires a lot of manpower. We found that to do it effectively, an individual coach can't coach more than three or four people. That makes it very laborious, and the overhead is very high to create that kind of model. We [also] went through staff turnover. In part that's good because we needed to find the right people. But we didn't see that amount of change coming in. And we probably should have been a lot more cognizant of it."

Not long after Cummings communicated his concerns to Slaughter, the new dean called Slaughter with *her* concerns about the Instructional Framework, which culminated in suggesting that the school take a "pause" on implementing the Instructional Framework. The dean reiterated Cummings' earlier concern, saying that the new teachers were complaining about the demands of the framework and in outright rebellion.

For Slaughter, the suggestion that the school pause the implementation of the Instructional Framework was shocking. The foundation had an agreement with Creation Village World School that together they would develop and refine procedures and expectations that would establish the school as a demonstration site. Slaughter said she had been working closely with Cummings, the previous dean and teachers to do just that. There were no conversations leading up to the call about how to fix concerns before jumping to pause the implementation.

'It was like a punch in the gut'

"When I got that phone call from the new dean, it was like a punch in the gut," Slaughter said. "I was thinking, this whole thing is done. I can't believe that Derek is not explaining to her that we are in a mutually agreed upon agreement and already years into making the school a demonstration site. How is this not crystal clear? We've all had multiple conversations about it. There was obviously a serious gap in communication from the top down. [The dean] was just

letting the teachers decide that they didn't want to do the framework without any push-back or group meetings so we could all hear the issues and come up with solutions to reach what I had been told by Derek were our shared goals. Amy [Soper] and I flew down to meet in person because I was explaining to Amy that this is big. The whole thing could dissolve right now because the administration suddenly is not on the same page. We did not have the support of the dean, and Derek was not holding her accountable to fulfill our agreement."

It also pointed to a larger issue — one that the foundation had experienced with G.E. Peters as well.

"We didn't have the leadership [at Creation Village World School] really advocating or pushing and saying this is important, this is what is expected in your role here," Slaughter said. "When we asked again about their goals and if they still wanted to be a demonstration site for the Instructional Framework, we were told the school was committed. That message was not being conveyed elsewhere."

From the dean's perspective, there was a litany of complaints by the new teachers — none of whom wanted to continue with the framework — that needed a response. The teachers saw the framework as a tremendous amount of work on top of the already difficult adjustment to teaching at a new school. One teacher was starting his first year teaching. For Slaughter, these problems could have been avoided if she had been part of the interview process for the new teachers and had had a chance to explain the Instructional Framework and the expectations around it. That would have been the time to weed out teachers who did not have the interest or foundational training to take this on.

In late October, Slaughter reached out to Cummings. She said that implementation of the Instructional Framework had all but stopped with new teachers. Slaughter had been unable to schedule weekly meetings with the dean to train her on the Instructional Framework — a crucial role if the school was to serve as a demonstration site. While having an Instructional Framework Coordinator was critical, ultimately it was the dean who would provide the leadership and direction for teachers using the framework.

Cummings thanked Slaughter for sharing her frustration and stated again that the school was committed to the Instructional Framework and the IF Rubric.

Shifting focus to the rubric

Slaughter, however, said that she, Razon and Wise-Beaumont continued to struggle to schedule meetings with Cummings and the dean. In response to feedback from the teachers, the team began largely focusing on training teachers to the IF Rubric rather than following the Instructional Framework's grade-level documents, which seemed like an easier lift.

After many meetings with school and foundation leadership, the first-year teacher was released from any obligations related to the Instructional Framework. The other teachers continued with foundation staff adjusting their workload around the framework based on the teachers' feedback so that it would be less time-consuming.

One of them remembered her initial experience with the framework as she started at Creation Village World School.

Patty Walker began teaching at Creation Village World School in 2019 after working for 25 years in the public school system. She said that when she was hired she was told that part of her job would be working with the Instructional Framework, but she was unaware how in depth and time-consuming it would turn out to be. She said it was probably the heaviest load for lesson planning she had ever experienced as an educator and that it only encompassed one subject.

She added that she was used to having autonomy where she would turn in her unit plans and was then able to apply them to her daily lesson plans as she saw fit. With the Instructional Framework, as an experienced teacher she at times felt like she was required to provide a level of detail in her lesson plans that was over the top, such as writing out the words she would say to the students. For her that was an ineffective use of her time because in the actual classroom, the conversations would not necessarily follow that script. Walker said she brought up her concerns to Wise-Beaumont and Slaughter, and sometimes that did not go well with Slaughter. For a time, she worked only with Wise-Beaumont.

“It was so frustrating to me,” she said. “The amount of time it was taking and, as a best practice teacher, it was an intrinsic thing that I already knew how to do. I felt like a lot of it was redundant for me. Sometimes I would come in with a lesson prepared and thought I’d be all good to go, and then things got switched around [by Slaughter].”

Teachers feeling micromanaged

Cummings said he heard such concerns from several teachers.

“It got more to where it was micromanaging,” he said. “And so the lesson plans became micromanaged to where they were picked apart so you try and build the perfect lesson. Well, you can’t build the perfect lesson.”

According to Cummings and Wise-Beaumont, another point of contention was that after the teachers had created lesson plans in the previous year, Slaughter told them they had to produce all new lesson plans to meet the needs of this year’s students. For some teachers who thought the reward of so much intense and laborious work on the Instructional Framework the previous year was having lesson plans they could use again, this was disheartening.

“You would always be told, ‘oh, you just get through the year and then all you have to do is make tweaks to your lessons the following year,’” Wise-Beaumont said. “So you go through this really laborious year. But the light at the end of the tunnel is that next year your plans are done if you stay in that particular grade level. But actually what Ginger did at the end of the year is she archived the lessons and you had to start from scratch.”

Cummings added, “That was probably the big spark for everyone. That was probably the biggest thing that didn’t allow the project to move forward. The teachers were not happy.”

Slaughter said she had explained to teachers that the process of creating a lesson plan involves knowing your students for that school year. Students change, so it would not make sense to use the exact same plans. They were told they could use the plans from the previous year as a guide and modify them to meet their new students' needs.

Walker added that the coaching with Slaughter did shift over time and began to feel like there was more give and take between them. She also said she found much of the coaching to add real value to her work as a teacher.

Slaughter provided valuable insights when Walker was struggling with a particular area in English/Language Arts and was ready with resources that went beyond what Walker might have thought to do in a particular lesson.

"There is a tendency as an experienced teacher to rely on what you know, and maybe there were newly published books that I had not read for students that Ginger would tell me about. And sometimes she would just give me a different point of view on the author's purpose."

Joiner added, "If Bainum could have expedited the lesson plans, that would be really important. [The lesson planning] was really tedious. I think a lot of teachers were feeling a little defeated and frustrated with that."

Finding a groove with the Instructional Framework Coordinator

This time period was not all frustration and seeming setbacks, however. Slaughter had found the full-time, on-site partner she needed in Wise-Beaumont. By this time, Wise-Beaumont had two years of training in the Instructional Framework under her belt and was an enthusiastic supporter. From the beginning, she provided coaching along with Slaughter.

"It went great; it really did," Wise-Beaumont said. "I had that relationship built with teachers before, and they knew I already had that experience myself. I'd been on the other side. And so they knew that I knew how it felt. I had been there and done it. It wasn't that I was coming in and saying, 'come on, it's easy.' Because the Instructional Framework was a lot of work. But when you're coached by someone who's already done it and has resources to share and really does support you rather than just meeting deadlines, I think it helps."

Wise-Beaumont added that because she was at the school and knew all the different directions teachers were being pulled with struggling students, communicating with parents, filling out report cards and having other obligations, she was empathetic when they might not get their lesson plans for the framework done in time.

"I'd be in all the meetings with teachers, and we did it together," she said. "I could provide that personal touch and support them because sometimes teachers just need to be heard. Sometimes you'd get an email from Ginger that would say 'where's your lesson plan?' But if she were here, she'd know, OK, I had a student in my classroom completely break down. The theater teacher didn't show up, I didn't get my planning session. Things happen like that. But I could be the cushion in between of being able to relay that information and being able to support that teacher."

Slaughter remembers that period as one when it felt like the work with the Instructional Framework was finding its groove — even with all the challenges. After a year of training on the Instructional Framework, Purdie and Joiner were enthusiastic supporters and urging other teachers to stick with it. Slaughter and Wise-Beaumont met regularly and had established a well-running system of coaching different teachers. They had set up a learning management system called Bullseye, which was tracking teachers' progress in the IF Rubric. Razon was going to go on maternity leave, and to fill the gap, Slaughter hired Myrna Candelaria, a former English teacher with decades of experience, to train on the Instructional Framework practices, with the idea that she could be an additional coach at the school with Wise-Beaumont.

Instructional Framework Coordinator pulled away to additional duties

But then around January 2020 — midway through the school year — Slaughter was notified by Wise-Beaumont that she'd been asked to take over the dean's duties. Slaughter said she again felt blindsided since they had another agreement that was now being changed by Cummings without a conversation. She immediately expressed her concerns in an email to Cummings that Wise-Beaumont could not effectively complete her duties as the Instructional Framework Coordinator and also be the dean. According to Slaughter, Cummings disagreed. A few months later, Wise-Beaumont officially became Head of Academics. Now, Wise-Beaumont was juggling her time between two different jobs and was often called in to sub for classes when a teacher called out. The brief window when the foundation had someone full time on-site to oversee the implementation of the framework was over.

Slaughter visited Creation Village World School, now changing its name to Creation Village World School, the first week of February 2020 to meet with Cummings and Wise-Beaumont. Slaughter spoke about how Wise-Beaumont's role as dean detracted from her work as the Instructional Framework Coordinator. At the meeting Cummings shared his new vision of focusing primarily on the IB program but also including some of the routines Slaughter had helped establish at the school for learning new practices.

Slaughter noticed the Instructional Framework was all but removed from the new vision. At the same time, the school was looking into selecting a new curriculum as an option to replace the Instructional Framework grade-level documents. With continued pushback on Slaughter's approach to coaching with the Instructional Framework, in mid-February 2020, Wise-Beaumont took on all the coaching with teachers and focused conversations on the best practices in the IF Rubric instead of the grade-level documents. Slaughter would coach Wise-Beaumont, who in turn coached the teachers.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, and the school leadership, teachers, and Slaughter and Candelaria had to adjust to remote learning. Candelaria's time shifted to working closely with Slaughter, providing curriculum research and knowledge-building support. Out of a new need, Slaughter and Wise-Beaumont worked closely together to create a virtual planning and teaching process for the teachers, and Slaughter coached one of the teachers she had worked closely with in the past.

Creation Village World School adopts a curriculum that has implications for the framework

By the end of the 2019/2020 school year, Cummings had announced another change for the school. It would be using an English/Language Arts curriculum for the first time since the school's inception. Up until then, the Instructional Framework had essentially functioned as a curriculum for English/Language Arts. But teachers still had to create lesson plans and find additional resources. For Wise-Beaumont, the new curriculum provided specific resources that teachers needed and cut down on their planning time. Teachers said for the school to be competitive academically they needed a common thread through the grades for all subjects, including math and science. The curriculum allowed them to do that.

Slaughter was not sold on the curriculum the school chose because, from her perspective, it did not include backward planning — a central element of the Instructional Framework. Wise-Beaumont countered that it did include backward planning but not in a format that Slaughter was used to.

For Slaughter, who had been using the Instructional Framework documents as the basis for coaching teachers on best practices, the school's decision meant that she had to learn an entirely new curriculum and find ways that she could marry the IF Rubric to that curriculum. That summer, Slaughter and Candelaria immersed themselves in understanding the new curriculum. Slaughter also worked with the newly hired IB Coordinator to mesh IB with the framework so that teachers could see how the two could work together.

But Slaughter also noted that between May and September 2020 communications with Creation Village World School dwindled. Wise-Beaumont was off for summer break in the month of July, which Slaughter was not aware of until she reached out to her about planning for the next year. Cummings said he would be the contact person for the Instructional Framework in her absence, but he was not readily available to do the necessary planning, Slaughter said.

2020/2021 school year — fourth year

The fourth year of the Instructional Framework implementation began with Wise-Beaumont as Head of Academics and continuing her now part-time position as the Instructional Framework Coordinator. At the start of the year, teachers were still learning how to teach classes remotely — an entirely new practice for them. They also had to learn and implement the new curriculum, including teaching math and science, and continue to take steps toward the school's hoped-for IB accreditation, all while learning and applying the best practices in the Instructional Framework.

Joiner described the new curriculum and the Instructional Framework as a great match. The curriculum provided a one-stop shop while the framework allowed them to reflect on their teaching and change approaches according to the needs of their students rather than having to follow a cookie-cutter approach.

Slaughter, Candelaria and Wise-Beaumont continued to do coaching calls with the teachers, but they were cut back to 30 minutes — from an hour a year earlier and 90 minutes at the beginning of the initiative in 2017. Slaughter and Candelaria also created documents to show teachers how they could still use the framework with the new curriculum.

With all the changes taking place at the school, for Slaughter it was becoming more and more obvious that the Instructional Framework was not a priority for school leadership. She had not received a response from Cummings to an August email asking for items required under the Instructional Framework Coordinator agreement. In mid-September 2020, Cummings asked Slaughter to find a time to talk with her about refocusing the coaching efforts for the year. In the meantime, he said that they would put on hold all coaching calls to ensure that they were all on the same page and not providing mixed messaging to the teachers.

The demonstration site comes to an end

In January 2021, after two months of trying to schedule a call, Bainum Family Foundation staff, including Soper, and Cummings spoke about the future of the Creation Village World School and the Instructional Framework. In that call, it became apparent that it no longer made sense for the school to be a demonstration site, Slaughter recalled.

After some follow-up discussions, the foundation sent an amended contract that would pay the full amount of the Instructional Framework Coordinator's salary through its end in June 2022 to help Creation Village World School complete work on the Instructional Framework that it could use going forward.

"I think both organizations came to a point where we didn't see this being something that we can even make successful as a pilot site," Cummings said. "So if we can't make it successful here, how are we going to be able to take it out to other schools?"

"We decided to phase out our partnership," Soper said. "It seemed like we were in alignment early on. We had conversations about what it meant to be a demonstration site. [But] through the years they were adopting different programs. There were different dean's every year. It was a lot of change at the school that we were trying to navigate and support. From my perspective, we were all realizing that we really need to define what we are working toward when we say 'demonstration project.' They wanted to use certain parts of the framework. We wanted them to use all of it."

Or as Slaughter reflected, "I guess from the start it wasn't a partnership."

The teachers and dean said they were not told that the project was ending. As the teachers at G.E. Peters had noted, the project just seemed to fade away.

"We just heard something about moving in another direction," said Joiner. "It would have been nice to know why exactly. Was there something that wasn't working out with the way we were implementing it? We invested a lot of time in it, and we were really using the product. Did it not work out? Was there some study they did? I think with all the time we invested, it would have been nice to know."

Slaughter said she emailed the teachers she was coaching that the foundation was taking a break from calls until she was able to meet with the school's administration about next steps based on the teachers' feedback. Like with G.E. Peters, it was her understanding it was the school leader's role to inform their teachers of the changes in a more concrete way.

What Has Continued at G.E. Peters and Creation Village World School?

The Instructional Framework is a product that many teachers and administrators found useful and that helped them do their job better. Among the aspects that they have continued to implement are the following:

- **The entire Instructional Framework as a basis for teaching at Creation Village World School.** The school would not be where it is now without the Instructional Framework, said Cummings.

“It was a tremendous growth opportunity for our school, and we wouldn’t be where we are without this project and without what Bainum has done,” Cummings said.

Added Razon, “From my perspective, it was so crucial and necessary to have the framework as we grew in those early years. Those were such pivotal years of forming who we are as a school, our approach to education and our reputation. We did not want to be a traditional school that followed a set publishing company’s curriculum where teachers just followed and completed all of these worksheets. The framework provided teachers with the guidance for excellence and also the freedom to create and bring learning to life while using research-based strategies. Teachers could use a hands-on approach and integrate interdisciplinary learning with projects. I think it helped define our identity in the community by being an alternative to traditional education.”

Nalani Cummings said that the school’s work with the foundation helped them identify the right teachers for the school. “I look at it as the longevity of the teachers who are still with us,” she said. “The ones who are still teaching at our school are the ones who did the framework really well and were able to allow the framework to do what it was meant to do. If I can have more teachers like Liz (Joiner) and Gemma (Wise-Beaumont) who understand that the framework holds all of these best practices, it will allow us to assess the students based on the skills [they are seeking to develop].”

Cummings added that Slaughter’s close work with Wise-Beaumont over the years made a notable impact on Creation Village World School’s Head of Academics. “Gemma learned so much from Ginger,” she said. “I feel like it guides a lot of how Gemma is in her leadership role. I think it grew her into that role of being able to be Head of Academics now. I don’t know if it was intentional, but [the Instructional Framework] really does turn these teachers into leaders and it really makes them experts on what they do.”

For her part, Wise-Beaumont said, “The school didn’t have standards before.... The framework brought that to school. I use the indicators. So teachers know that when I walk into a classroom or I look at a lesson plan, the components I’m looking for are that real-world application, the backward planning, the differentiation and the cultural responsiveness. The expectations from those indicators are still very much there. I know that the kids are OK and they’re being served with aligned resources because that benchmark is already there.”

- **Developing a deeper understanding of standards and how to apply multiple ones during lessons.**

“I felt like in my years at Creation Village World School using the Instructional Framework I grew a lot as a teacher, and that goes back to me learning the Instructional Framework,” said Purdie. “I grew in my knowledge of standards for sure. If you know what the standard entails, then it’s going to be a lot easier to plan and pull out things for the classroom.”

- **Using the essential questions and “I Can” statements, which leads to deeper learning.** “It has made students more confident and increased participation and understanding, because now students are listening to understand so that they can be the one to explain it or share it with the class,” said James. In the past, she would post a learning objective but did not always give students a chance to reflect on their own learning.

“With the ‘I Can’ statement, rather than just teaching, I started to put the onus on the kids, so they could say ‘well, I can do this or I can’t do this.’ In doing so, I allow them to see what they could do differently to understand better or to know what support they need,” James said. “Everybody wanted to say what they knew. It allows for deeper learning by the students.”

“There are a lot of things that I took from the framework that I still apply to all my classes, like the essential questions,” said Dickerson. “When I was in school [for my master’s degree in teaching], we never really used the essential questions and big idea. And in the framework, it made sense to start from what is the question you’re trying to answer? What’s the big idea here we’re addressing? It’s putting the teaching into context. A lot of times teachers will just teach what’s on the paper. And kids can tell when you’re doing that. When you have the essential question, we’re all starting from the same place, and it does make [the teaching] relevant for them.”

Added Walker, “The students would look for the essential questions. They would look for that ‘I Can’ statement so that if you didn’t have it, they would say, ‘what’s our I Can for the day?’”

- **Adding a daily grammar and spelling element to lesson planning and teaching by unit rather than topic, which also helps reinforce student learning.** In the past, James used to have grammar and spelling on specific days. But through her work with the Instructional Framework, she started incorporating both daily.

“I do grammar and spelling every single day now because I feel like it supports writing better. If they are constantly doing it, then it makes them aware and makes them more intentional in trying to be correct,” James said.

Structuring teaching around units that are related to each other allows students to build deeper connections and build on what they know, James said. For example, if she is

teaching about spiders in Language Arts, she can compare that with insects in her science unit.

“When the kids can make connections and build on what they know, it’s easier for the new learning to be taught,” she said.

- **Connecting the grade levels so that teachers are providing a consistent approach for students that builds from year to year.** It also provides a way for teachers to work together across grade levels.

When Judie Rosa took over as principal of Hinsdale Adventist Academy, shortly after providing advice on the Instructional Framework, she used the knowledge she gained to lead the teachers in creating a cohesive approach to helping students master standards from grade to grade. She found that teachers were using their preferred curriculum or books such as *Spelling Connections* and *Worldy Wise*, but there was little connection from grade to grade. She had teachers from all grades meet together and map out what they were doing so they could have alignment across the grades, using the principles from the Instructional Framework. Rosa created a spreadsheet so that all the teachers could see where they were and what the gaps were.

“I got that from the Instructional Framework,” Rosa said. “I didn’t do that before.”

Rosa did this without having the actual Instructional Framework, which was still being piloted. She said if she had the framework, it would be even more useful in connecting the teaching from one grade to another.

Joiner added, “The framework connected the grade levels in a nice way. We could go through the hallways in school and say, ‘oh look, they’re working on this too just like we are.’ And we could partner with the different grade levels and see how it was building. It was exciting.”

- **The reflection piece has helped teachers take the time to actively reflect on their work and has become part of their routine.** Walker said she is still incorporating reflection into her routine as a teacher.

“The thing I enjoyed most was the reflection,” Walker said. “Once you had completed the week or the lesson plan, you would meet with Ginger and you would have that time to talk about what worked and what didn’t. I really enjoyed that because it gave us the opportunity to reflect and look at my teaching and go through and take out the fluff. Maybe an activity looked really good on paper but it had no impact or bearing on the standard.”

- **Learning what it meant to do backward planning and to use rubrics.** Teachers learned about these practices when they were in school, but many said they never fully applied them until their work with the Instructional Framework.

“The whole idea of backward planning is something that I use,” said Joiner. “And then another piece I constantly use are the rubrics we created. We created speaking and listening rubrics as a way to assess those standards, which is something that I hadn’t really done before. So I’m constantly walking around with a clipboard and the rubrics we created last year to use and put in student portfolios or just use as justification for report card grades. Those have been valuable to me.”

Where Should the Instructional Framework Go From Here?

Across the board, teachers and administrators said that the Instructional Framework and/or the IF Rubric are great products that can help student teachers, new teachers and experienced teachers. They are backed by research and informed by teacher feedback every step of the way. Many of the teachers who participated in the pilot and the demonstration project are enthusiastic proponents of both the framework and the IF Rubric. Teachers had a variety of views on how the framework could be used going forward.

Here are the responses from participants about various approaches the foundation could take to disseminate the Instructional Framework:

How to package the Instructional Framework

- **Make the entire Instructional Framework available online with some support.** If the framework is as complete as some of the Creation Village World School teachers believed it was on its way to being, it could almost serve as a turnkey product for schools without the need for a coach. For those teachers, the framework would need an introductory video to ground participants, a help desk to answer questions that come up and some ongoing professional development.

“Now that it’s created, it has to be magnificent,” said Walker. “A teacher should be able to take that binder of lesson plans and have their basic instruction from day one. That would give you your base, and you would still have autonomy. You could sprinkle in the pieces that you need based on the class you had that year. It would not need the coaching component if the binder is done and lays out everything.”

Other teachers and administrators said that for schools to take up the Instructional Framework, it would need more hands-on support at first, including an introductory webinar explaining the framework and how to access materials, including the videos that the foundation has collected. Specific videos that would be helpful would include an example of a teacher using the framework in a classroom. Having a model lesson plan and an example of a teacher walking through what she tried, and what worked and didn’t work, would also be helpful.

Rosa said that she thought a number of teachers in the Seventh-day Adventist system would be interested in using the Instructional Framework because it fills in gaps in the curriculum that many schools are using.

“There’s always this conversation about ‘what do you use?’” Rosa said. “People are just piecemealing it together, trying to figure it out. There’s nothing out there that everyone is using or should be using in regard to all the different components surrounding Language Arts.”

Teachers would also need ongoing professional development to help it stick, including a summer coaching program or a train the trainer program.

Walker and Ford said that it would be helpful to have regular professional development such as a session on building a lesson and providing teachers with reinforcement around using the Instructional Framework.

Llewellyn said it would be important to have a help desk where someone could answer questions from teachers who are not accustomed to the format of the Instructional Framework. Rosa said that foundation staff would need to create a video that walks participants through the Instructional Framework and explain the process of using it, such as how to access resources online, examples of lesson plans, how they are designed, etc.

- **Make the Instructional Framework available online with coaching or paid on-site support.** Other participants said it would be difficult for teachers to implement the Instructional Framework fully without someone actively coaching them and without someone at a school dedicated to implementing it.

Simons and Wise-Beaumont said that they could not see a way for the Instructional Framework to be implemented at a school without a coach and having someone on staff who would become the expert on it and then lead a team of teachers through it.

Purdie said that having a coach is essential to implementing the Instructional Framework with fidelity.

“When you use it the right way, it’s so effective and teachers can be so successful with it,” Purdie said. “I would hate for it not to be done the right way. I think a coach would be really important to have.”

Fuentes suggested starting by training a few teachers on the Instructional Framework at a particular school, and they could then become ambassadors for the school and train other teachers. The foundation would need to pay for one of those initial teachers to oversee the coaching and implementation of the framework.

- **Promote the IF Rubric as a stand-alone resource.** Teachers found all the indicators helpful but suggested focusing on just a few to start with, such as reflecting on their practice and backward planning. Specific IF Rubric indicators can be learned and applied regardless of a school’s curriculum. Teachers can use the IF Rubric as a benchmark for planning and implementing research- and standards-based instruction that promotes the four Cs of 21st-Century Learning (Critical thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Communication) and supports students with diverse abilities, interests

and learning preferences. The IF Rubric can also serve as a tool to provide specific, targeted feedback through leader or peer observation or video-facilitated self-reflection.

“The rubric gives a great breakdown on what a teacher should be doing or trying to do,” said King, when shown the indicator. “This would have really helped guide my reflection.”

Candelaria said that the rubric could be a way for administrators to start conversations with teachers who might otherwise have their guard up when asked about their performance in the classroom.

“The reflective piece could really be leveraged very effectively if you go in and tell teachers, ‘let’s reflect on everything that you do, in your estimation, really well,’” Candelaria said. “I was a teacher for a very long time. And I resented it when somebody came to tell me what I should do better without even knowing me well enough to know what I had been doing in the classroom. So you take the approach of let’s reflect but let’s start with everything you do really, really, well. And you just don’t go on that alone. You say, ‘and how do you know that you do that really well? Where is the feedback that indicates you do that really well?’ So I think the Instructional Framework has that very important piece, and reflection, the No. 1 indicator, can open the door.”

Who to target with the Instructional Framework

- **Develop the Instructional Framework as a course for college students planning to go into teaching.** These students rarely get the practical education they need for teaching before they go into the classroom. The Instructional Framework could fill an important gap, particularly in areas such as backward planning. Such a course could be part of a student’s initial experience in the classroom while still in school, with a requirement to create a lesson plan using the framework. The framework could also work well for first-year teachers because it provides a step-by-step almost scripted plan, said Holland.

The Seventh-day Adventist school system is the second-largest parochial school system after the Catholic Church, Candelaria said. It might make sense to partner with the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities and see if the Instructional Framework can be taught as part of the requirements of a bachelor’s degree in education, she said.

“There’s a disconnect of what you learn in college and the actual application of what you do in a classroom,” said Guerrero. “If Bainum could present this as a class in college, teachers would be prepared when they graduate for how to plan a lesson, how to be creative, how to go from point A to point B. You don’t learn that in college.”

- **Target new or experienced teachers who love finding new ways to teach.** The framework requires a particular type of teacher. A teacher has to be open to learning new ways of approaching their craft if they are to benefit from the Instructional Framework. Using the questions Slaughter asked of the incoming teachers could be a way to filter for teachers who would get the most out of the framework.

“It would require a teacher who’s willing to put that type and level of work into the classroom and teaching,” Razon said. “It’s not just your typical publishing company’s large textbook where you’re just going to the next page to make sure the content is covered. It’s a very intentional way of teaching. You need a self-motivated teacher willing to grow, learn and put in the effort to try a new or different approach.”

- **Focus on professional learning communities (PLCs) as a locus for sharing the Instructional Framework and help teachers get CEUs for implementing it.** Teachers listen to other teachers. In the Seventh-day Adventist system, PLCs meet either at individual schools or across schools. Either way, PLCs could be a way for teachers to see the ideas of the Instructional Framework. By working with PLCs, teachers can feel like the onus is not just on them to follow the IF Rubric or framework, Ford said. Instead, they are part of something bigger that they can share with their fellow teachers and they can learn from each other, she said.

How to promote the Instructional Framework

- **Hire the teachers who helped develop and implement the framework to promote it to other teachers.** They are contagiously enthusiastic about the framework and can speak teacher to teacher about how it has helped them in their classroom. They will be able to show teachers, administrators and parents what children will look like at the end of their school years with the Instructional Framework.

“Someone like Judie Rosa would own it,” Daniels said. “She’s that combination of a very tactical, into the weeds, detailed type of person who can talk people into why they should love it. She can talk to parents about what their children will look like as a result of being part of the Instructional Framework. She’s going to paint a picture of their child at eighth grade that’s going to have them ready to run for president.”

- **Tell school administrators about the benefits of the Instructional Framework.** The Instructional Framework could help administrators clearly communicate to staff that the school takes teaching seriously, and teachers need to be accountable for what they are presenting in the classroom. The foundation can explain how this can be useful for new schools, starting with providing a strong platform for teachers across grades.

“The Instructional Framework is really good for new schools,” said Nalani Cummings. “It gave us a platform. It gave our teachers a very outlined plan.”

- **Position the Instructional Framework as a way for teachers across grade levels to collaborate on progressing students in areas such as reading or meeting standards.** Often it can feel like teachers from different grades at the same school do not have consistent approaches to teaching and progressing students, making the adjustments particularly difficult for students with different learning needs and approaches. The framework could serve as a structure for teachers across grades to have more cohesiveness and better communication in making sure they are reaching their educational goals for students.

- **Pitch the framework as a complement to or even replacement of existing curricula**
Teachers are often unhappy with the curriculum they are using because they see it is limited and too much of a lockstep approach that does not meet the needs of their varied students. Teachers know they want something like the Instructional Framework but are unaware that it exists.

“I had a third-grade teacher at another school who kept telling me that they didn’t want to do the Pathways curriculum and asked me if there was anything else,” said Rosa. “I was trying to get the framework to her because I know that it is awesome and that it has been piloted. There is this extensive framework that has been worked on for several years, and I don’t think a lot of people know it exists and that it is ready to be tapped into.”

Learnings From Participants

- **Foundation leaders did not listen enough to the needs of the teachers and administrators at the schools they were working with and supporting, Daniels said.** On reflection, foundation staff could have taken more time to understand what motivated all the different parties involved — teachers, administrators, the conferences and unions, and the North American Division — and what they needed. The foundation could have had a better understanding of what it could and could not do.

Daniels said that what has motivated the foundation is that if students go through the Instructional Framework, they will be better for the experience. While that may well be true, if the foundation does not do its part to motivate teachers and administrators, the Instructional Framework is no good to anyone. It becomes another product that a school is requiring for a teacher who will trudge through it with no energy or excitement, and the students will feel that.

- **The foundation needs to better understand what motivates teachers and administrators and show how a product like the Instructional Framework will help them meet *their* goals.** From what Daniels has seen, ease of implementation motivates, a clear path to increase enrollment in the Adventist system motivates, and resources that are going to be available for a number of years motivates, he said.

“Selling the Instructional Framework has focused more on the product than on the outcome the product could provide,” Daniels said. “If administrators knew that we have a system that can work and will improve their test scores, and here’s the resources that we’re going to provide you with to execute on these things and we’re going to commit to it for five years, I think they will be more confident to commit, versus ‘here’s a two-to-three-year funding agreement and after that you’re on your own,’” he continued. “I think what motivates them is security and ease of implementation ... especially during the time where they are all struggling to try and keep enrollment up.”

Slaughter added that the foundation could do a better school survey to get a clearer direction of what the school and teachers want and need. “If a survey is done well, the

foundation can learn whether a school has the same educational philosophy as the framework and if the teacher's pedagogy is also aligned. It could help identify what indicators to start with and support school's in determining their school-wide goals. Slaughter said, "With the school in Florida, we agreed it was going to be a demonstration site without the teachers having any knowledge of it. It was being mandated instead of offered."

- **The foundation should have been more persistent in getting buy-in from leadership at the different levels of the Seventh-day Adventist education system prior to launching the Instructional Framework pilot and demonstration.** It can be frustrating to work with any large system because of the slow pace of adoption or change. But working with educational leaders across the Seventh-day Adventist education system is the best way to get universal buy-in for the Instructional Framework across the North American Division, said Daniels. If the foundation had slowed down and been more persistent in co-creation, the efforts may have been more successful.

From Daniels' perspective, the persistence means doing much more listening to what the church feels it needs in helping to educate its students, finding potential synergies in what the church wants and what the foundation wants, and giving up some ownership of the Instructional Framework even if that means the church makes tweaks that the foundation might not agree with.

"The [lesson from the Instructional Framework] is the persistence and patience it takes to get buy-in," Daniels said. "But I think we've learned that in all of our initiatives. Are we patient enough and persistent enough to get the buy-in for the system and then maybe support the Instructional Framework growing within the system, rather than us doing it from the outside?"

- **Historically, the foundation has tended to take a community-informed approach to problem solving based on identified needs.** While well-intentioned and grounded in research, this approach did not support co-creating and creating solutions with the administrations and teachers who were most impacted.

"What this was and what the foundation sees in some of the other partnerships was, they hear of a need, they observe that need, there is interest [from schools] in partnering around this need, but the foundation is the one that takes ownership for creating and providing the solution," Soper said. "The foundation drove this initiative, not the schools."

Candelaria, a veteran teacher who provided coaching and input into the Instructional Framework at Creation Village World School, said there is a difference between the foundation creating an approach to solve a problem and then sharing it with teachers to get their feedback, and asking teachers what "they absolutely need and wish for" and then designing a solution in response to those specific needs.

- **Understanding what the Bainum Family Foundation is, their values and what they are trying to accomplish before starting out with the Instructional Framework could give teachers in particular a helpful context for this work before they are**

thrown into the details of implementing it. In particular, it could be helpful to know that the foundation is there to help teachers grow and to guide and coach them through the lesson plans. That could lessen the anxiety of feeling like they were being observed through the lesson planning and recorded lessons.

Similarly, administrators could use guidance in how they are communicating an initiative to teachers, particularly in providing notice well in advance of a coming school year about the initiative.

Llewellyn, a teacher at Creation Village World School, said the foundation could have secured greater teacher support if they had introduced the framework to the teachers a year before officially implementing it. That way, teachers could have participated in adapting the framework to their students' and schools' needs rather than have the expectation of what felt like following an already finalized framework in lockstep, she said. Such an approach would also help teachers get to know the foundation and Slaughter over time and in a less high-stakes manner than immediately moving into implementation, she said.

- **Not having someone from the foundation on the ground at Creation Village World School created a disconnect between the foundation and what the teachers were experiencing in their day-to-day roles and had an impact on the project.** When Slaughter was at Creation Village World School, implementation went much more smoothly because she could see firsthand in the classrooms what the teachers were dealing with. What Slaughter would have done from the beginning was have an on-site Instructional Framework Coordinator, the role Wise-Beaumont filled to its fullest for a few months before also being required to take on additional responsibilities as dean.

Wise-Beaumont and Walker agreed, saying that when someone directs an initiative like this largely from afar, it can lead to a lack of sensitivity to the chaos of a school day, such as not understanding why someone was 10 minutes late for a Zoom call because it was the first time all day they had been able to use the bathroom or that the teacher was dealing with an ill or disruptive student.

- **Taking the work in smaller chunks and praising the progress the teachers were making at Creation Village might have made a difference in how the teachers felt about the Instructional Framework.** Giving teachers more agency in their role in the Instructional Framework might have helped as well.

Joiner, a teacher at Creation Village World School, suggested, "Support teachers by making sure that when they leave a [coaching] meeting the coach points out all the good things they have done."

She added, "Teachers might [also] need support throughout the week in finishing the lesson plan, especially in the first few months. And maybe focus on one thing at a time and let other parts of the lesson plans go. So for the first few weeks, let's really focus on choosing pre-assessments or let's focus on choosing which standards would be best as you get to know your class, and adding on a new piece every week would be helpful."

Nalani Cummings added that it would have been helpful for teachers to hear an acknowledgment of how much work they were putting into the framework. She said that there tended to be an emphasis on planning and building units.

For Llewellyn, it would be helpful not only to break down the framework into smaller chunks, but also to give teachers more agency in making adjustments to the framework to fit their needs in the classroom.

“It is taking the time to hear the teacher’s goals and taking into consideration what they’re worried about working on that week,” she said.

- **The foundation could have communicated directly with participating teachers about why they were ending the pilot and the demonstration project.** When the foundation decided to end its pilot project with G.E. Peters and implementation with Creation Village World School, Slaughter notified the teachers that they were pausing their work. The foundation expected school administrators to inform teachers of the formal end of both projects. But teachers at both schools said they never received word from anyone that the work was over. They said they wished they had heard directly from the foundation about the decision to end the project after the time and effort they had invested in it.
- **Given the continued obstacles, foundation staff wondered if there were times they should have paused to reflect on the initiative and consider ending it rather than pushing through.** In the Instructional Framework initiative, there were a few times when the foundation might have paused and considered ending the work. One was after the pilot at G.E. Peters, and others were during downturns throughout the Creation Village World School demonstration, particularly when the Instructional Framework Coordinator was no longer working full time on the framework, as the foundation understood she would be.

How the Foundation’s Work with the Instructional Framework Connected (or Did Not Connect) to Its Mission

- **Advancing equity.** Slaughter intentionally developed a framework with equity and cultural responsiveness in mind. Teachers said that the framework gave them practical resources and materials, which they had not had before, to make sure their teaching included culturally relevant pedagogy and real-world connections. Teachers added that their students of color saw themselves and their lives reflected in the materials presented to them.

“That’s the thing that I think has been most impressive to me — that we can create materials and dig into them in a way that really highlights what we’re trying to accomplish with equality and equity in the materials that we’ve developed, and Ginger’s done that,” said Rosa. “It’s important for students in the Seventh-day Adventist system to see

themselves in materials in school. It changes the level of engagement they are going to have.”

Rosa noted the articles that she read on racism and learning that African American girls get suspended at 10 times the rate of white girls, which was “mind blowing” to her. She had not received blind spot bias training in college or elsewhere. Now as a principal, she has teachers take the Harvard blind spot bias test to help them see biases they are unaware of. Rosa said that as a Hispanic woman, she is sharing more with teachers about her experiences of bias in schools. She also expects to see culturally relevant pedagogy and real-world connections addressed in her teachers’ lesson plans.

“I knew that one of the reasons I went into education was because everyone has a right to equitable education. But the Bainum foundation put a name to it and defined it for me,” Rosa said. “And they gave me tools on how to become a stronger leader of equity in my school. My work with the Instructional Framework has transformed everything I do.”

LaKeisha Dickerson, a teacher at G.E. Peters, said, “[The foundation] did a good job making sure that things were culturally equitable so that everyone has the opportunity to see themselves in the framework. You can choose your text; you can choose things that apply to your students. That is creating an equitable space for students.”

- **Creating community engagement.** Teachers at G.E. Peters said they felt engaged because they were co-creating the Instructional Framework and felt as though they were part of something that not only would help them but would help other teachers as well. Teachers at Creation Village World School felt less engaged, at least initially, because it often felt like a forced march and one in which their voices and opinions were not always valued.
- **Building relationships that are trusted, authentic and collaborative with the people and organizations the foundation collaborates with.** Similar to how they felt about the foundation’s role in increasing community engagement, the teachers at G.E. Peters felt positive about their relationships with the foundation largely because they felt they had a role in creating the framework and that Slaughter was there to help them do their jobs better.

What did not go as well were the relationships at Creation Village World School. According to Daniels, the foundation was impatient with the competing priorities that the Creation Village World School administrators and teachers had to juggle. He said that the foundation’s expectations for the principals there who were in charge of all aspects of the school were unrealistic.

“We have to understand that things happen sometimes in schools that are out of their control,” Daniels said. “Frustrating as it may be, that’s an approach that we have to take.”

- **Providing equitable compensation for partners.** Whether the teachers and schools involved in the pilot and demonstration were appropriately compensated for the contributions they were providing is a question the foundation must examine. Teachers did not receive financial compensation for the time and brainpower they invested in the Instructional Framework project. Teachers at G.E. Peters received hours that could be applied to their CEU requirements for teacher recertification, and Creation Village World School teachers received three college course units. An important question is whether the foundation should have valued the teachers' contributions in another way for the additional work they were expected to do to pilot and implement the Instructional Framework.

While G.E. Peters was provided \$15,000 a year to cover substitute teachers, it also received additional resources through other partnership engagements with the foundation. This included literacy and curriculum materials, and on-site personnel who supported students through tutoring and teachers as a literacy specialist over multiple years. Creation Village World School received \$1.5 million to support expanding its facilities to serve as a demonstration site for the Instructional Framework as well as multiyear funding to establish an on-site Instructional Framework Coordinator position. But now that the foundation understands the realities of what went into piloting the framework and preparing a school to be a demonstration site, it must examine whether the resources provided to the schools were equitable.

Conclusion

The Bainum Family Foundation's investment in the Instructional Framework for 21st-Century Educators helped teachers engage their students in class and learn how to meet multiple Common Core standards. Participants uniformly said that the foundation should make the framework broadly available. So far, the framework has not made the wider impact that the foundation had hoped for, though plans are still evolving to market it.

Some of the takeaways from this 10-year initiative may seem simple but are nonetheless worth noting. Foundation leaders said they need to listen more to the needs of the people they are trying to assist and bring those people in earlier, not just to provide feedback on a plan that is already hatched but to help craft the plan itself. If the foundation wants to change a system — in this case, the Seventh-day Adventist educational system — leadership will need to find a way to work with that system. Teachers and anyone else responsible for implementing a project will be much more enthusiastic and willing to work on it if they feel they have real input and that the multiple demands placed on them are appropriately acknowledged by foundation staff and adequately compensated.