

Dr. Freddie Williamson

Superintendent

Hoke County Schools, NC

Classworks recently had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Freddie Williamson, Superintendent of Hoke County Schools and 2016 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year. Under Dr. Williamson's leadership (2006 - present) Hoke County Schools has received several awards including the North Carolina Innovator in Digital Learning award and dropout rates in the district have decreased by 65%.



How long has Hoke been using Classworks?

We first purchased Classworks in 2007 close to the beginning of my Superintendency at Hoke. The district was not performing well. Classworks' individualized instructional plan for each student was something we needed to close the achievement gap. We used Classworks for remediation for about seven years. At that time we used the Scantron assessment and then Classworks generated targeted instruction using that data.

You stopped using Classworks in 2013, why?

The state landscape for education has been undergoing quite a shift here in North Carolina. We had state resources being recommended, the change in standards and assessments, and the focus on reading by grade three. We decided to step back from all the programs we were using as we evaluated how to best serve our students and teachers.

Classworks is excited to partner with Hoke again! What made you take another look at Classworks for your district?

Thank you, we share your enthusiasm! There were a few things that stood out to us. First, using Classworks to help students catch up was working. We still have that need here in Hoke and Classworks was a great help to us in closing the achievement gap. The second thing we liked was that Classworks partners with the assessment we use today district-wide, Renaissance Learning's STAR. Individualizing learning with our current assessment is a huge benefit. The third, and possibly most interesting reason, is the new classroom resources you have developed since we last implemented.

Why are the classroom resources so important?

Our teachers have been asking for rigorous reading resources to support lesson planning. More importantly they needed resources to support differentiation in a student-centered math

classroom. When they saw the new math activities they were hooked! Our teachers are so excited about these new aspects of the program.

So you made the decision to reactivate Classworks?

(Laughs) Well, I was certainly excited about what Classworks could do for us. But, our instructional resource decisions are made as a team. Buy-in from our principals and teachers was key if we were going to reactivate our partnership with Classworks. Sometimes it's harder to change an existing perception than it is to look at something new. I invited principals, instructional coaches, and lead teachers to review all of the updates and changes to confirm this fit with our instructional vision as a team. The team was completely on board about re-adopting Classworks ASAP.

What differentiates Classworks from other programs?

Classworks has evolved tremendously since the first time we implemented it. We are reinvigorated by your focus on classroom resources to support teachers combined with new partnerships that enhance the individualized learning. In addition, our district is focused on integrating technology into classroom learning. Our teachers can use Classworks on all the devices we have. We are a Google district so I was pleased to hear Classworks works with Google Classroom. It's just one more example of how you continue to improve to meet districts' needs.

Thank you for your confidence in Classworks. We are excited to be working with your team again and look forward to supporting your continued success. You're welcome. Classworks is a wonderful instructional resource and we're happy to be working together again.