



EdVestors' Interview with Anna Kim, Learning Specialist and 4th Grade teacher at the Gardner Pilot Elementary School in Allston.

"Students often enter my classroom identifying themselves as "a good math student" or "a bad math student." This presents a real barrier for all of us to overcome. If students don't experience or perceive success in the middle grades and if they don't solidify their mathematical conceptual understanding, they're already on a path to falling behind. It's a 'make it or break' time period in the middle grades and this is why EdVestors' focus on middle grades math is so critical.

The support I've received from EdVestors has really pushed me and my colleagues to rethink our teaching of mathematics. This year, we changed our model for teaching math so that instruction is more student-focused with more hands-on math experiences, visuals that help them make meaning of the different math concepts, as well as offer student choice. This year, one of my students used to doubt her math abilities and had a hard time completing work in a productive manner. She would often throw up her hands and say "I just can't do it!" The changes my team and I made to our mathematics instruction have helped her feel more supported and more confident in her mathematical abilities. As part of a grade 4 presentation shared with the whole school community, this student and a few of her peers created a powerpoint presentation about how they learned math this year. Moreover, that same student has been observed helping other students and teaching her peers how to do multi-digit multiplication using the area model, a skill which she struggled with initially.

Every month, after each Math Fellows meeting, I am always in awe of my fellow educators and their ideas about how we can advance math instruction. The opportunity to meet and work with math teachers from across the city – teachers I never would have interacted with if I had not participated in Zeroing in on Math - has been so valuable. Teaching can be an isolating experience. Unless we create opportunities for teachers to collaborate, learn from one another and from experts, and to develop the art of teaching, it's going to be really hard to advance the profession and students' learning.

Boston is such a diverse district – we have so many different kinds of learners and one form of instruction is not going to work for everyone. EdVestors encourages us to be creative educators and not be confined by one way of doing things. They encourage us to be leaders of change, to "dream big, be creative, and implement practically." EdVestors asks how they can support our ideas and is always right behind us."