0:00

This year, we've been really lucky to be able to work with ATA on their pilot program for the Teaching Assistants Professional Standards.

0:08

The team have really embraced it and learned so much about their own professional practice and being able to use each of the Standards to support them with their own goal setting for performance development conversations.

0:25

So myself and the lead EAs meet with the EAs to talk about where they're at, whether their skill set is really great, and also where we can work with them to support and upskill them in spaces where they feel they're less confident or they find an area challenging.

0:42

So we've worked with the booklet and gone through on many occasions.

0:48

The EAs, the lead EAs have also led professional learnings on it.

0:52

So if I hand over to Sarah, she could probably tell you a little bit more about what we did in that space.

0:56

So absolutely, we ran several professional learning during our Monday meeting just to introduce the program in itself.

1:04

So myself, the other lead EA and a couple of other the EAs went through the pilot program together and we use that knowledge to bring it back to the team and help them to understand how to set goals based around those professional standards.

1:19

We wanted to introduce the professional standards as a way of them being able to identify what those kind of expectations are within the role, but also to identify where their strengths are, which is a really important thing for our EAs because we have such an amazing team and to identify whose strengths can support other people to develop their own strengths and also to develop areas of learning and upskilling and then identify opportunities within the team for that to happen.

1:47

So then beyond that, we looked at our professional learning conversations and used the pilot program to allow them to develop their goals.

1:57

And so we had several conversations with each of the EAs to identify where they were at in the professional standards and where they wanted to go and then set their goals and have those professional learning conversations.

2:10

And we're at the moment just running through with them where they're at in that journey.

2:15

And then towards the end of this term, we'll go through those goals again to see how they've gone in achieving them and making sure they've got the right resources and it's been really helpful to identify what resources they need to achieve that.

2:26

So having those professional standards has been helpful to identify where we want to go as a team as well.

2:32

We've also been using it to kind of identify areas to work on as a team.

2:37

So in our meetings we've introduced like ATA programs that align with the goals that a lot of the EAs have so that we can introduce those and upskill the whole team. And yes, so the pilot program has just been really fantastic.

2:52

And also as the lead EAs to be able to deliver professional learning conversations in a more streamlined approach where the EAs have a fundamental understanding of what they want to achieve rather than just pulling goals from previous things that they've looked at, they have a really clear vision of where they want to go.

3:11

I absolutely love the standards and I loved that it's sort of, it's like the teachers have a standard that they can look at and obviously work towards certain things.

3:22

When we first started the program at the end of last year, I just thought it was amazing and it really helped with my goal setting.

3:30

The conversation that I had with Sarah with my goal setting, it was such a smooth process and it really helped me define what I wanted to achieve for the year.

3:39

And I've been working towards that since we've had that meeting every week, so yeah.

3:44

Having been an EA here for quite a while and have done previous performance managements and you're coming up with thinking of what you were trying to do, having the standards has been really good because it's been able to make you look at yourself and see where you may not quite have got to where you would like to get to.

4:03

Yeah it's been really good that you can look at different areas and discuss it with the whole team as well of where we all are at together.

4:11

I think the biggest benefit I found was to have the common language, so you're talking about the standards, it's breaking down your job into manageable chunks, you're looking at whether you're developing, proficient, accomplished and advanced, but then talking about what that means and what you need to do and then there's, you know, where I'm at and where I need to go, there's an obvious gap of what do I need to do to get to where I want to be.

4:35

So I think that's what really resonated with the team is that it really created a space for people to have that narrative, have that dialogue of how we can improve because having high standards and improving is all about our why and our why is because we want to do the very best for our students and we want our students to have the very best and to have the biggest success that they can have themselves and we know that success is different for everybody and we want our students to have their own level of success.

5:07

If I want to add something to you, for me it was a really clear plan after our meeting with our leaders.

5:17

So we have a very clear plan to back to it all the time and see how much I achieved to achieve my goal and how much do I need to achieve more.

5:29

So all the time I was back to my resources that I choose with my leader and then see which one do I need to use more and all the time when I have even short time in the school, I use my time to go back to my resources and get more skills and learn more to achieve my goal.

5:52

It was really good to be clear and planned before.

5:56

So I also feel like it's given purpose almost to our meetings and our conversations.

6:05

It's added a lot of value in those sort of, yeah.

6:08

And I think it's also strengthened us as a team and looking towards this journey we have and what our focus is.

6:16

And whilst we have an amazing group of EAs and everyone has the students at the heart of their journey, it is really focused in where we can go as a team.

6:26

and really have a strength-based approach around that.

6:29

Every permanent, fixed term has been through the process, so we'll have quite a few at different levels as well.

6:36

So we've got a variety of people who've come in fresh because there's a real shortage of staff.

6:41

So some of the EAs that were new to, we onboarded, have no experience, but we've had to, well, we've had to develop and grow our own, I suppose.

6:50

And that's why ATA programs have been really great because we're very good at giving them time.

6:55

talking about high standards and like I always talk about like if you're on your own there's only so much you can do as a team collectively the amount of change and difference you can make to students lives is compounded it's about going back to their why all the time and making sure with the best version of ourselves growing as a team just using all those positive affirmations as to why we're developing. And that growth mindset. I think where we had the most obstacle was with EAs who had been in the role for such a long time.

7:29

So I think they've been through a lot of these processes of developing professional learning.

7:34

So selling it to them was a little bit tougher rather than the younger ones who are very eager to work on the professional learning.

7:42

I think the main thing that we kind of tried to identify them as pillars, ones that were sitting in that, you know, they were really exemplary, they were already, you a lot of them had skills that we could harness and help to assist other EAs to really push them.

8:01

So, but also in that they were able to have a look at themselves and maybe identify areas where maybe they weren't exemplary.

8:09

So having a look at those generally around IT, technology, you know, those kinds of goals.

8:15

So whilst we would identify their strengths and bring them in as people who could assist with that development, it also meant that they also then have to follow that process and have a look at some areas as part of that to identify where they were moving forward.

8:29

So whilst it was a difficult hurdle to overcome, it actually worked with the several sessions that we ran on and having to identify on their own SMART goals.

8:40

So we kind of asked them to identify two SMART goals and they had to then go through the professional standards and kind of work out where they were and find one where they could shift forward.

8:51

And I think that was very helpful.

8:53

You know, they couldn't just sit in the exemplary space.

8:56

They had to have a look through the whole thing and find an area.

8:58

Because you're identifying all the positive.

9:00

I like to start with all the positives.

9:02

You're great at every, you know, you can't be great at everything, but you're great at something.

9:06

So what are the things that you're great at and really set it from a positive as a point system?

9:11

So, you know, you looked at one of the standards and then you had 100 points and then you give in your 100 points out to developing proficiency, accomplished and advanced.

9:20

So you're sharing it out.

9:21

So you are, you're kind of in a general, you might be advanced a little bit, you know, there's some parts of it.

9:26

So you might give yourself 10 there, or you might give yourself 20, most of it in proficient and a little bit in developing.

9:32

Then, all right, so what is the pinpoint?

9:34

What can you do to then come up a little bit?

9:37

So I think sharing a light on everything, that's great.

9:40

The problem you have is sometimes is when an EA thinks they're really great at something, but then you think maybe they're not quite so great.

9:47

That is a challenging conversation.

9:49

It doesn't happen very often, But if it does, I do think the professional standards in itself really sold itself in giving us a guideline.

9:58

Like, I think that's something that was really missing in this space.

10:01

So I don't think it was actually a hard sell in itself.

10:05

Like Jay saying, staff who maybe consider themselves in a different space than where we might see that.

10:10

But that is handled in a really strength based approach and looking at their professional development and in those conversations away from other staff.

10:17

but I do think it's given everyone a really clear vision, and I think that's really important.

10:23

And professional purpose, you know, sometimes the EA role can sit in a very grey space, and yeah, I don't know, it just aligns with that teacher, that role, that model really well, and to sit alongside that really has been very beneficial, and to see where they are in the grand scheme of the education system.

10:47

I would say that the team here, the EA team here, are the most collaborative, friendly, fun and wonderful group of people that I've ever worked with.

11:00

Absolutely. They strive their very best selves, they bring their best selves and they strive for the students every day.

11:08

They really care. They go above and beyond, absolutely, for their students. They really care.

11:15

and they're real advocates they advocate for their students every day with the complexities of students timetables they've got different subjects they've got different teachers they've got relief teachers they've got loads of different students that then they're navigating high school which is really complex for students and they really need somebody that cares and that can advocate for them and my team do that every single day every single lesson and that really is why we love our jobs.

11:46

Absolutely.

11:46

Yeah, thank you so much guys.

11:47

Thank you.

11:48

See ya.