Forecast 5 and Lancaster Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13:

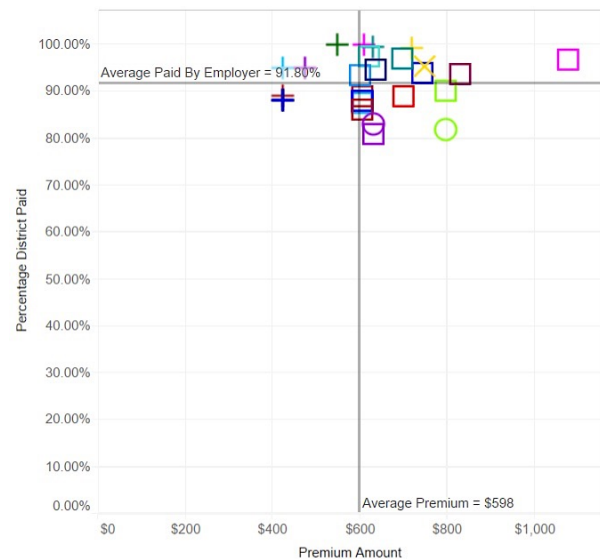## Embracing the art of collaboration through the use of data analytics

With schools increasing their adoption of data-driven strategies, Educational Service Agencies are further discovering the importance of adapting their current service models to align with the ever-changing needs of their districts. Recognition of this shift fosters an opportunity for ESAs to enhance their offerings portfolio through various partnerships. In Pennsylvania, Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 and Forecast5 Analytics are embracing the art of collaboration through the use of data analytics.

In the spring of 2016, IU13 made the decision to invest in both the 5Sight and 5Cast platforms from Forecast5 for all 22 of their public school member districts. 5Sight provides districts with easy access to statewide comparative data in a user-friendly, visual format. 5Cast is a financial forecasting platform that allows school leaders to develop multi-year financial plans using detailed general ledger data.
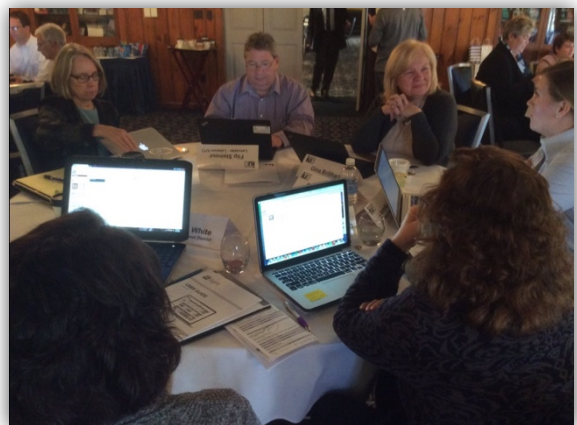
"Part of our mission at IU13 is to enhance the operations and learning of our member districts," IU 13 Chief Financial Officer Gina Brillhart said. "We felt providing them with the 5Sight and 5Cast tools would put two powerful tools in the hands of district administrators."

While the subscription provides an opportunity of service for both IU13 and Forecast5, the strength of the partnership lies in the organizations' ability to co-develop the tools to fit the specific needs of IU13 administrators.

For years IU13 has collected, processed and compiled negotiation driven data for their districts in the form of a notebook. Using historical and current data provided

A screen capture shows one of the visual analytics that IU13 members have access to using their custom collective bargaining data. Shown below are educators collaborating at a professional development opportunity presented by IU13 and Forecast5.

through the survey efforts, Forecast5 was able to develop a series of new IU13 specific interactive analytics that can be utilized in conjunction with the data in the notebook. The goal of this project was focused on enhancing

the IU's ability to empower districts with a rich visual representation of their data to help navigate challenging conversations during the collective bargaining process.

The partnership has also supported the creation of an Annual Financial Report (AFR) ingestion process, to aid in reducing the lag time from the submission of the AFR to the state to the release of the data. IU13 and Forecast5 have also partnered to provide increased professional development opportunities for the districts though web based trainings and onsite workshops.

"Forecast5 has been responsive to our needs and the needs of our member districts," Brillhart said. "They have been onsite to hold our hands as we have learned to navigate the tools and have provide district-specific consulting to design sophisticated reports that provide our districts with powerful tools for communication with their key stakeholders."

To learn more about the partnership between IU13 and Forecast5, you can contact Forecast5 Strategic Partnerships Director Eric Smith at esmith@forecast5analytics.com