

# Key Findings from the Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching (PIIC) Teacher and Coach Survey Report

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Teachers and teaching are at the forefront of improving student engagement and increasing student learning. The Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching (PIIC), a partnership between the Annenberg Foundation and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, works to build teacher capacity as a means of increasing student engagement and improving student achievement. Since 2013, annual surveys have been administered to both the coaches and teachers that participate in the PIIC program as part of a larger series of research studies on the PIIC model. The teacher survey explores the effects of coaching, looking for relationships among coaching, teaching, and student outcomes as perceived by teachers themselves. Over 300 teachers from schools that provide instructional coaching and who participate in an evidence-based literacy program as part of PIIC were surveyed in the winter of 2014-2015. A survey of almost 350 instructional coaches looked at the extent of the coaches' interaction with teachers, the topics addressed with teachers and their perceived impact on teachers' instruction, and the coaches' interaction with their PIIC mentors.

### Teacher Survey

The response rate for the 2014-2015 PIIC teacher survey was 71 percent (220 out of 310 respondents).

#### Working with Instructional Coaches

- Almost all teachers received some form of coaching (92 percent).
- An overwhelming majority of teachers were coached one-on-one by a PIIC coach during the 2014-2015 school year (90 percent). Of those teachers, a majority were coached at least once or twice a month (59 percent).
- Over two-thirds of teachers (69 percent) were coached in small groups or participated in coach-led whole school activities and of those that did participate, two-thirds participated at least once or twice a semester (67 percent).
- According to teachers, coaches covered a wide range of topics during coach-led small group or whole school activities. Almost two-thirds received training around the essential elements of the PIIC framework (64 percent). Teachers reported coaches mostly addressed the following topics:
  - Using appropriate literacy strategies (88 percent).
  - Attending grade level or content area meetings (79 percent).
  - Using data for instructional improvement (77 percent).

- Implementing the BDA cycle of instructional coaching (77 percent).
- Applying reflective practice (64 percent).

### Impact of Coaching on Teachers

- A majority of teachers (84 percent) reported that they have changed their instructional practice as a result of the coaching they received. Most teachers reported changing the following practices:
  - More willing to try new instructional techniques (61 percent).
  - Reflect on their practices more or more effectively (54 percent).
  - Assigning more reading and writing in content areas (47 percent).
- Almost all teachers who reported that their instructional practice has changed also reported that the changes in their classroom practice had a positive impact on student engagement (99 percent). In addition, almost all teachers also reported that the changes in classroom practice had a positive impact on student learning (98 percent).

## Coach Survey

The response rate for the 2014-2015 PIIC coach survey was 73 percent (252 out of 343 respondents).

### Working with Teachers

- Almost all coaches (94 percent) reported providing one-on-one coaching to teachers. The same percentage of coaches reported conducting small group or whole school activities for teachers, with 70 percent conducting at least six activities a year.
- Coaches reported addressing similar topics to what teachers reported they addressed in one-on-one sessions. Notably, “using appropriate literacy strategies” was the most addressed topic for both groups. The next two topics coaches reported they addressed most often were “using data for instructional improvement” (80 percent) and “applying reflective practices” (55 percent), which were two of the top five topics teachers reported were addressed.
- Those topics were also addressed frequently in small-group and whole-school coaching. In addition, a majority of coaches reported also addressing “holding grade level or content area meetings” (73 percent), which was the second-most reported topic by teachers.

### Impact of Coaching

- A majority of coaches reported seeing teachers change their classroom practices as a result of both one-on-one and small-group coaching. Many coaches reported seeing changes in the following practice changes as a result of one-on-on coaching:
  - Engaging students more effectively (67 percent).
  - Focusing more on literacy and using higher level literacy strategies (57 percent).
  - Using data to make decisions about instruction (38 percent).
- Many coaches reported seeing changes in the following practices as a result of small-group coaching:
  - Focusing more on literacy and using higher level literacy strategies (55 percent).
  - More confident in trying new strategies (54 percent).
  - Using data to make decisions about instruction (40 percent).
- There is alignment between what the coaches have observed the teachers changed about their practice and what the teachers reported they changed. Notably, both groups see that teachers are more confident in trying new strategies. Also, the coaches note that teachers are engaging

students more effectively and 99 percent of teachers reported that their practice has led to greater student engagement.

### **Working with Mentors**

- A majority of coaches have met one-on-one with their PIIC mentor (64 percent), but over one-third had not met one-on-one with their mentor.
- Almost all coaches attended mentor-held meetings (99 percent) and over three-quarters of coaches reported that they have attended over four coaches' meetings during the year.
- Various topics were addressed during mentor-led coach meetings that aligns somewhat with the topics that coaches addressed with teachers. Both "applying reflective practice" and "using appropriate literacy strategies" were addressed by mentors to coaches and by coaches to teachers. Coaches reported mentors addressing the following topics most frequently:
  - Implementing the BDA cycle of coaching (90 percent).
  - Applying reflective practice (81 percent).
  - Building a collaborative environment among teachers (80 percent).
  - Using appropriate literacy strategies (80 percent).
- Many coaches reported the mentoring has had a positive impact on their coaching. Many coaches reported the following changes in their coaching practice:
  - Sharing specific strategies and resources with teachers that were provided by their mentor (56 percent).
  - Collaborating with other coaches (52 percent).
  - More motivated and confident in my practice because of mentor support (47 percent).
  - Reflecting more effectively on my coaching practice (45 percent).

## Conclusion

Overall, almost all teachers are receiving both one-on-one and small-group coaching and a large majority of coaches are offering these services. This coaching has led teachers to make changes in their instructional practice in various positive ways. Of the teachers who report changing their classroom practices, almost all believed it has led to an increase in student engagement and achievement. Coaches also reported seeing similar changes in teachers' classroom practices and similar positive results.

The topics addressed during coaching sessions are relatively aligned between what the coaches and teachers reported. Almost all the coaches used the BDA cycle of collaborative coaching and believed they effectively address each of the essential elements of the PIIC framework: literacy strategies, use of data, and applying reflective practice. Most coaches received some mentoring from their PIIC mentors, and the BDA cycle of collaborative coaching and the essential elements were also topics addressed by the mentors. The coaches also reported that working with their mentors has positively changed their own coaching practice.