

The Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI)

In 2005, PAHSCI began implementing one-on-one instructional coaching in 26 high schools in 16 high-needs [districts](#) across Pennsylvania, with the generous support of the Annenberg Foundation. PAHSCI's work continues, and lessons learned from PAHSCI led to the creation of the Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching ([PIIC](#)). PIIC is a statewide resource, working through the 29 Intermediate Units (IUs), that will expand instructional coaching to schools across the state.

The PAHSCI Mission: To build capacity within school districts to improve teaching and student achievement through collaborative whole-school reform practices based on instructional coaching, collegial networks, and job-embedded professional development for teachers.

The PAHSCI Approach: PAHSCI's approach reflects the growing consensus about what constitutes good professional development for teachers. It is:

- Ongoing and job-embedded, recognizing that teachers want and need strategies for continuous improvement in their work.
- Linked to state standards, curriculum, and assessment, so that teachers acquire knowledge and skills directly related to what their students need to learn.
- Confidential and non-evaluative, so that teachers can work honestly and openly with their coaches and colleagues on self-improvement.
- Founded on evidence-based strategies for improving instruction, to offer teachers practical, classroom-focused assistance.

The PAHSCI Program: One-on-one coaching for teachers is the heart of PAHSCI, but coaching is supported by a professional development infrastructure. PAHSCI provided:

- One literacy and one math instructional coach per 600 high school students.
- Training for coaches in the Penn Literacy Network (PLN) evidence-based strategies for developing reading, writing, and comprehension skills across the curriculum.
- Regular on-site "over-the-shoulder" coaching for teachers in implementing PLN strategies in their classrooms.
- Frequent professional development opportunities for coaches, teachers, and school

leaders on instructional coaching and literacy across the content areas.

- Continuing education credits for participation in training sessions: 1.5 credit units (4.5 semester credits) from the University of Pennsylvania.
- Mentor teams who visit districts regularly to provide ongoing support to coaches and administrators, organize networking meetings, and offer other professional development activities. Mentors also coordinate a yearly Administrators Retreat focused on school leadership issues.

PAHSCI Partners: Although instructional coaching may seem like a simple strategy, the special skills and resources of the following partners are essential to its success:

- **The Pennsylvania Department of Education**, which supports school improvement efforts through grants and program initiatives.
- **Foundations, Inc.**, a nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance, professional development, publications, and tools to schools and other organizations.
- **The Penn Literacy Network**, a comprehensive literacy professional development program.
- **MPR Associates, Inc., the Academy for Educational Development, Research for Action, and The Center for Data Driven Reform at Johns Hopkins University**, which have conducted research on the implementation and outcomes of PAHSCI.
- **The Philadelphia Foundation**, which provides administrative and management support for private foundations and nonprofit organizations in southeastern Pennsylvania.

PAHSCI Results: PAHSCI is filling a research void— data on the effectiveness of instructional coaching is sparse. Determining the unique contribution of instructional coaching to school improvement is difficult because schools are complex organizations, and many factors influence teaching and learning outcomes. PAHSCI has begun to build a research base demonstrating both the promise and the challenges of instructional coaching. Findings from research conducted on PAHSCI over three years include:

- In 18 of 21 PAHSCI schools, the percentage of 11th-graders reaching proficient or advanced levels in math on the Pennsylvania State Student Assessment (PSSA) exceeded the statewide percentage of students reaching proficiency from 2004-2007.
- In 15 of 21 PAHSCI schools, the percentage of 11th-graders reaching proficient or advanced levels in reading on the PSSA exceeded the statewide percentage of students reaching proficiency from 2004-2007.
- Seventy-nine percent of teachers coached regularly said that their coach played a significant role in improving their classroom instruction and practice.
- Teachers who were regularly coached one-on-one reported that: 0 They made significant changes in their instructional practice.

0 Their students were more engaged in class and enthusiastic about learning.

0 Student attendance in their classes increased dramatically.

More Information

For more [information on instructional coaching](#) .

For more [information on PIIC](#) .