

2018-19 Evaluation of the Instructional Lead Coaches Structure

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EA19-526-4

At-a-Glance

The Instructional Lead Coaches (ILC) Structure, previously known as the Academic Facilitators (AF) program, was restructured for the 2018-19 school year. Instructional Lead Coaches (ILCs) served as the bridge for School Leadership to provide direct campus instructional support. The primary goal of the ILC was to empower and build capacity within the campus instructional coaches (CICs). Instructional support for the campuses included academics and instructional models, including blended learning, small group instruction and other models.

The ILC Structure received \$5,875,399. (decrease from \$5,978,757 in 2017-18) in Title I funding for the 2018-19 school year. The funds supported personnel, supplies and materials, and employee travel expenses.

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which the ILC Structure was implemented with fidelity and met expected outcomes as outlined in program documents. Data were collected through staff member interviews, documents, and surveys.

Program Implementation

School Leadership modified the ILC Structure for the 2018-19 school year in terms of assignment and accountability to redefine the model of coaching and feedback and to strengthen the core program responsibilities. These modifications included:

- a more collaborative approach among ILCs, Teaching and Learning (T&L), and School Leadership;
- assignment of ILCs to networks; and
- ILC assignment by campus grade level (elementary/secondary), instead of by student grade.

Instructional Lead Coaches

The work of ILCs was guided by School Leadership 1) to ensure strong accountability for the implementation of district priorities in content areas and 2) to increase the blended learning instructional model. Five ILCs served Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) campuses and were not included in this evaluation.

ILCs received training every Friday (ILC Fridays) that included:

- two Fridays per month with T&L to increase depth of knowledge and to develop content and professional development (first semester: English/language arts;

second semester: science); ILCs then applied this knowledge in training campus CICs, principals, and executive directors (EDs);

- one Friday per month of coaching training to build coaching capacity (provided by outside vendor); and
- one or two Fridays per month with School Leadership to present ideas, address needs, and collaborate (e.g., sessions on reading, research-based sound practices, etc.).

A total of 393 ILCs attended nine T&L training sessions, 299 attended seven coaching training sessions, and 281 attended eight School Leadership sessions during 2018-19.

ILCs provided training to the CICs through CIC conferences, generally offered one week before Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) meetings. A total of 961 CICs attended CIC conferences for the combined months of November 2018, January 2019, March 2019, and May 2019.

Executive Directors

ILCs were assigned to one of six networks of campuses and reported to 17 EDs in 2018-19 (generally, three EDs, two elementary and one secondary, per network). Each ED was assigned a mathematics and a reading ILC; each network had a total of six ILCs. Networks also received support from one science ILC (four added in 2018-19), one blended learning ILC, and a districtwide ILC (provided additional support).

Campus Instructional Coaches

CICs (N=311) supported teachers to help strengthen content knowledge delivery of instruction, with an ultimate goal of improving student academic achievement. All campuses had at least one CIC (most had two, one reading and one mathematics). CICs reported to principals and used various methods to improve teaching, such as coaching, monitoring data, focused dialogue, collaborative planning, action plan implementation, and professional development.

2018-19 ILC Structure Survey

In collaboration with the program manager, surveys were developed and administered to EDs, ILCs and CICs in April 2019 to collect feedback about services provided by the ILCs during the 2018-19 school year and suggestions for future program improvements.

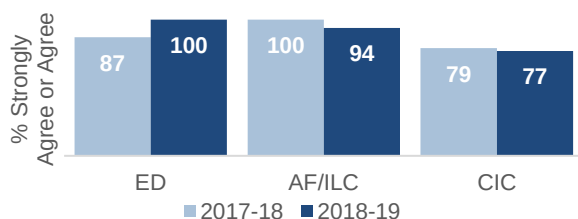
Results were compared, as applicable, to those from the 2017-18 AF program surveys conducted prior to program modifications. The evaluator used frequency and content analyses to summarize survey responses,

Survey Results

A total of 15 EDs (79%), 53 ILCs (88%), and 250 CICs (80%) at least partially completed the surveys. As shown in Figure 1, a higher percentage of 2018-19 EDs (100%) than ILCs (94%) and CICs (77%) agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that the ILC structure was effective; ED agreement also increased 13 percentage points compared to 2017-18. Furthermore, although most respondents agreed that the new structure was effective, rates decreased slightly for ILCs (six percentage points) and CICs (two percentage points).

Figure 1: 2017-18 and 2018-19 Perceptions of AF/ILC Structure Effectiveness

The Instructional Lead Coach structure is effective.



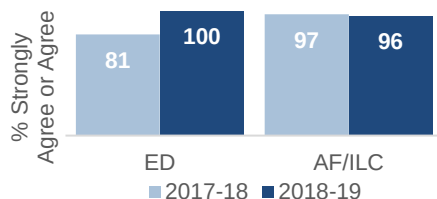
Source: 2017-18 AF and 2018-19 ILC Structure surveys.

Note: AF=Academic Facilitators. ED=Executive Directors. ILC=Instructional Lead Coaches. CIC=Campus Instructional Coaches. 2017-18 Ns: ED=17, ILC=34, CIC=324; 2018-19 Ns: ED=15, ILC=53, CIC=236.

As shown in Figure 2, in 2018-19, almost all EDs (100%) and ILCs (96%) agreed that CIC efforts contributed to teacher performance improvement. The percentage of EDs who agreed increased 19 percentage points from 2017-18.

Figure 2: 2017-18 and 2018-19 Perceptions of CIC Effort Contributions to Teacher Performance

CIC efforts contribute to improvement of teacher performance.



Source: 2017-18 Academic Facilitators and 2018-19 ILC Structure surveys.

Note: ED=Executive Directors. AF = Academic Facilitators. ILC=Instructional Lead Coaches. 2017-18 Ns: ED=17, ILC=34; 2018-19 Ns: ED=15, ILC=53.

Executive Directors

EDs determined which campuses in their networks to prioritize for ILC support. Ninety-three percent of EDs indicated that both reading and mathematics ILCs served all campuses in their clusters during 2018-19, and all (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that the services ILCs provided were of high quality and met the needs of the campuses they served. The top two support services EDs reported assigning to reading and mathematics ILCs included curriculum support (mathematics: n = 10; reading: n = 9; e.g., lesson planning, assignment and delivery, etc.), and coaching (mathematics and reading: both n = 9).

A large percentage of EDs (73%) indicated that CILT training with T&L was at least somewhat beneficial to their networks' needs. All ED respondents (100%) believed that the model of ILCs providing coaching and support was moderately or extremely beneficial. In addition, almost all EDs (93%) indicated the ILC structure had strengthened the skills and practices of the CICs.

The most frequently mentioned strength of the ILC structure identified by EDs was specialized support for ILCs (n=11; e.g., content area support, coaching and observations, and resources).

The two top supports EDs identified that would be beneficial to the ILC structure in 2019-20 included:

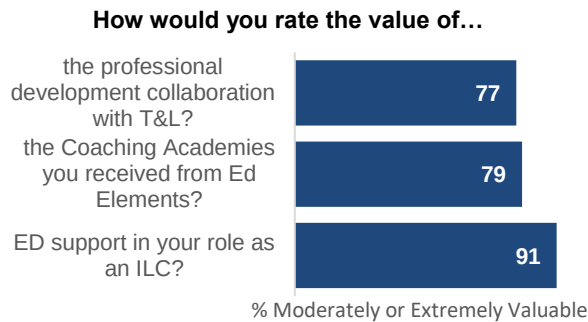
- **Time (n=12):** more dedicated time with the ED; more dedicated planning time; more campus time (especially on Fridays); and
- **New training opportunities (n=5):** more topics; more cross-level training.

Instructional Lead Coaches

ILC survey respondents represented all district networks, with four to 11 ILCs from each network completing the survey. Most ILCs (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a strong alignment with their EDs in providing guidance and support in their clusters/networks. Most ILCs (85%) also agreed that the training and collaboration they received in 2018-19 prepared them well to provide support services that highly met the needs of their assigned campuses.

In addition, as shown in Figure 3, most ILCs (91%) considered the support they received from their EDs to be at least moderately valuable, and a majority considered the professional development collaboration with T&L (77%) and the Coaching Academies (79%) to be at least moderately valuable.

Figure 3: 2018-19 Instructional Lead Coaches Structure Implementation Perceptions (N=53)



Source: 2018-19 ILC Structure survey.

Note: ILC=Instructional Lead Coaches. ED=Executive Director. T&L=Teaching and Learning.

ILCs were asked to list two things that worked well for them in 2018-19. The three top responses included:

- **Collaboration/connection (n=42):** working collaboratively with other ILCs, EDs, CICs, and other stakeholders;
- **Professional development (n=21):** Coaching Academies, targeted PD, and CIC conferences; and
- **Autonomy and flexibility (n=13):** trusted to make own priorities and flexibility to provide support based on campus needs.

ILCs also listed two opportunities for growth as an ILC. The top three responses were:

- **Developing knowledge and competency (n=42):** technology, recent trends, and research/content training;
- **Collaboration (n=19):** within campuses, with other campuses, and in content areas; and
- **Coaching skills (n=17):** listening, observing, modeling, and coaching cycles.

ILCs also listed two specific supports that EDs could provide that would strengthen the ILC role in the 2019-20 school year. The top two desired supports included:

- **Communication of clear vision and expectations (n=24);** and
- **Time (n=17):** dedicated planning time, weekly check in time with the ILCs, and help prioritizing time.

ILCs (N=30; 57%) who were AFs in previous years were asked to compare the ILC role and structure to the previous role of an AF. Sixty-four percent of these ILCs responded that the ILC role/structure was at least somewhat better than the previous AF program.

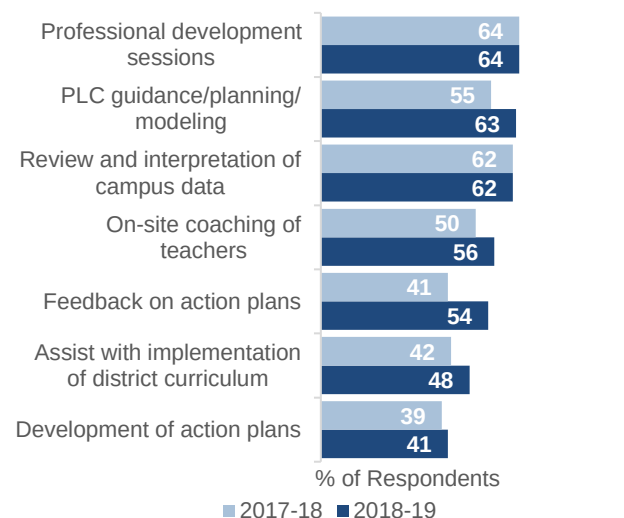
Specifically, ILCs most frequently said that the new structure provided more collaboration (n=11) and more content support (n=7) than the AF program.

Campus Instructional Coaches

CICs served campuses at all grade levels. Almost a third of survey respondents (29%) reported that 2018-19 was their first year as a CIC, and another third had served as a CIC five or more years. Most CICs (97%) indicated they and their campuses had received services from an ILC during 2018-19, and 56 percent said these services were provided on a regularly scheduled basis.

CICs identified the frequency with which ILCs provided a list of services to them and their campuses in 2018-19. As shown in Figure 4, ILCs most frequently provided professional development services (64%), Professional Learning Communities (PLC) guidance/planning/modeling (63%), and review and interpretation of campus data (62%). The frequency with which CICs were provided each of the services remained consistent or increased from 2017-18, with receiving feedback on action plans increasing the most of all services (+13 percentage points).

Figure 4: 2017-18 and 2018-19 Services ILCs Provided to CICs

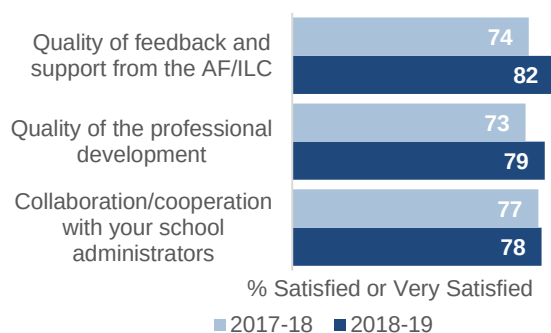


Source: 2017-18 Academic Facilitators and 2018-19 ILC Structure surveys.

Note: ILC=Instructional Lead Coaches. CIC = Campus Instructional Coaches. PLC=Professional Learning Communities. 2017-18 N=324; 2018-19 N=236.

As shown in Figure 5, most CICs were satisfied or very satisfied with implementation overall, and respondent satisfaction improved the most compared to 2017-18 for the quality of feedback and support from the AF/ILC (+8 percentage points).

Figure 5: 2017-18 and 2018-19 CIC Satisfaction with Aspects of ILC Structure Implementation

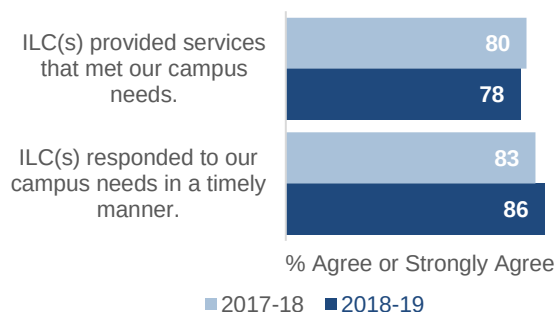


Source: 2017-18 Academic Facilitators and 2018-19 ILC Structure surveys.

Note: AF=Academic Facilitators. ILC=Instructional Lead Coaches. CIC=Campus Instructional Coaches. 2017-18 N=324; 2018-19 N=236.

As shown in Figure 6, similarly to the previous year, a high percentage of CICs agreed that ILCs provided services that met campus needs (78%) and responded to campus needs in a timely manner (86%).

Figure 6: 2017-18 and 2018-19 CIC Perceptions of ILC Services



Source: 2017-18 Academic Facilitators and 2018-19 ILC Structure surveys.

Note: ILC=Instructional Lead Coach. CIC=Campus Instructional Coach. 2017-18 N=324; 2018-19 N=236.

The top four ways CICs indicated they grew from the ILC structure during the 2018-19 school year included:

- **Feedback (n=67):** learning how to provide useful feedback and receiving/incorporating useful feedback;
- **Knowledge (n=64):** strategies, content, and district goals;
- **Coaching (n=56):** implementation of improved coaching practices (e.g., coaching cycle, real time coaching); and
- **Data (n=43):** planning, analyzing, and implementing data for decision making.

The top three suggestions from CICs for improving the CIC conferences included:

- **Scheduling (n=84):** shorter days/sessions, fewer competing session times, and offering online sessions;
- **More specific strategies (n=52):** deeper dive within content sessions and more hands-on practice; and
- **Training sessions (n=51):** greater variety of topics and more sessions.

Recommendations

- **Continue to build on the strengths of the ILC structure and consider the 2018-19 survey results for ongoing improvements.** According to survey data, the ILC structure showed positive improvements for the 2018-19 school year over the previous year. Perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of the ILC structure for EDs, ILCs and CICs remained high in 2018-19, especially for EDs. EDs and ILCs were in high agreement that CIC efforts contributed to the improvement of teacher performance. CICs indicated a significant increase in satisfaction regarding the quality and support they received from their ILCs. Suggestions were provided for supports, opportunities for growth and improvements that would be beneficial to the ILC structure in 2019-20, ranging from communication of clear vision and expectations to scheduling changes for training sessions.

References

Garcia-Rincón, R. & Costello, R. (2018). 2017-18 Evaluation of the Academic Facilitators Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

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