Partnerships for Learning
Student-Centered Inquiry for School Transformation

Partnerships for Learning (PFL) coaches support teachers and administrators to assess and address the student learning gaps that underlie low academic performance, and raise the overall effectiveness of classroom instruction to meet every student’s needs.

Site-based Inquiry Teams receive coaching to identify and work with focal students, practicing formative assessment and intervention cycles with them to close learning and achievement gaps. Focal students become a lens for better understanding and addressing every student’s learning needs. PFL coaches help teachers to embed formative assessment into daily classroom practice, use real-time student data to adjust instruction, and build productive learning partnerships with students that foster engagement and efficacy.

Services
• **25 days of coaching.** Includes facilitation of relevant meetings, instructional coaching for Inquiry Team teachers, leadership coaching, and research and data management.

• **Expert coaches.** PFL coaches are experts in school change and instructional coaching, supporting teachers in all content areas to improve instructional planning and practice.

• **Instructional seminars** to provided needed content in literacy, learning theory, cultural competence, and other areas.

• **Participation in a network of schools** doing and sharing similar work.

• **District-wide engagements** are encouraged. Develop strategies for central office support of sustainable instructional improvement in schools across your district.

• **Fees** are based on project parameters and grant subsidies are available for qualifying schools.

Results

**Dramatic English Proficiency Gains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Futures</th>
<th>Elmhurst</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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Schools with strong implementation closed or narrowed CST ELA proficiency gaps between target groups and district averages in a single year. Target students in all 12 pilot schools in 2009-10 outperformed their peers by **13 percentage points** in targeted CST strands.
**Phase 1: Build Culture & Inquiry Conditions**

- Develop conditions for productive collaboration around instructional improvement.
- Identify key equity challenges.
- Develop distributed instructional leadership capacity.

**Activities**

- Coach works with Principal to develop/strengthen (instructional) leadership team and identify key equity challenge(s).
- Coach works with leadership team to create/strengthen equity-centered professional learning communities (teams) who work collaboratively to identify student skill gaps and improve their instruction.
- Coach facilitates as-needed professional development to build capacity in data analysis, formative assessment and collaboration protocols.

**Outcomes**

- A system of sustainable inquiry-based collaboration and professional development.
- Effective collaborative teams (PLC’s).
- Alignment of teams/PLC’s with instructional leadership structure.
- Increased capacity to identify, understand root causes, and begin addressing key equity challenges in the school.

**Phase 2: Deep Inquiry with an Inquiry Team**

- Inquiry Team of teachers & leaders.
- Focus on accelerating the learning of 15-20 focal students.
- Develop expertise in formative assessment and instructional intervention.

**Activities**

- School forms an Inquiry Team of teachers & leaders to address a key skill gap for 15-20 focal students.
- Coach provides facilitation & coaching in generating various forms of data to identify high-leverage skill gap(s).
- Team designs and implements a series of instructional interventions for focal students.
- Teachers develop Learning Partnerships with focal students to help them accelerate their own learning.
- Team takes learning from intensive inquiry work to begin informing broader systems decisions.

**Outcomes**

- Increased teacher skill with formative assessment and fine-grained data to inform instructional planning.
- Inquiry Team instructional capacity to design and implement intervention cycles to address key skill gaps.
- By “going small” Inquiry Team develops clearer understanding of causes of gaps and potential solutions.
- Significant learning gains for focal students in key skill areas - and potentially for a wider group of students as well.

**Phase 3: Going to Scale & Systems Change**

- School-wide collaborative inquiry culture & practice.
- Close gaps for more students, in more skill areas.
- Develop more strategic and distributed leadership.

**Activities**

- Inquiry Team work continues; inquiry methodology spreads.
- School-wide equity-centered PLC’s deepen their practice.
- Coach develops instructional leadership capacity across roles.
- Coach works with school leadership to strengthen decision-making structures and processes.

**Outcomes**

- All teachers in school practice formative assessment. Increased instructional capacity for student acceleration.
- Leadership structures & systems decision-making processes are increasingly driven by inquiry & data.
- Steady increases in student achievement school-wide. Benefits for all students, including higher performers.
- School internalizes capacity to design, lead and use various forms of inquiry regularly to address ongoing challenges.

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**Build school-wide conditions then go small to get big results**