

Job-Embedded Professional Development

District and School Improvement at American Institutes for Research (AIR)

AIR's District and School Improvement Center (<http://revivingschools.org/>) provides a smart, real-world, hands-on approach to school improvement that is based on a framework grounded in research and refined by practice. Instead of implementing a one-size-fits-all program, we identify the needs specific to districts and schools and provide guidance for modifying existing programming or starting fresh. District and School Improvement Center staff believe that sustained district and school turnaround and transformation can be achieved through building capacity at all levels of the educational system and developing a strong collaborative partnership among teachers, leaders, families, and communities.

Background

AIR recognizes, and research indicates, that the interaction between teacher and student has the largest and most direct impact on student achievement (Nye, Konstantopoulous, & Hedges, 2004). Research on professional development indicates that the one-time workshop is not effective in changing teacher behavior or in enhancing student learning gains (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Beyond the workshop, other models of professional development have proven more effective in changing teachers' behaviors. Central to AIR's transformation service, we support a two-pronged approach to job-embedded professional development of direct instructional coaching and collaborative professional dialogue through professional learning communities (PLCs)—our theory of action.

Service Description

Effective instructional coaching is at the heart of any school transformation, as teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement. AIR's experienced content-specific coaches address the ongoing needs of teachers, specialists, and school-based coaches. AIR content coaches provide expert advice, mentoring, and other support through on-site coaching over an agreed-upon time frame and remotely via online format. The subject, matter, duration, and structure of the services are customized for each school's needs. In addition, our online Coaching Tracking Tool helps districts, schools, and coaches consistently collect data, and manage and organize their coaching program.

PLCs are a foundation of supports for teachers. Our services include training for the effective facilitation of PLCs, coupled with targeted professional development in the necessary content (e.g., mathematics, literacy) and instructional strategies.

Value We Bring

By partnering with AIR in job-embedded professional development, districts and schools can expect improved teacher practice, resulting in deeper and sustained engagement in student learning, higher student achievement on multiple measures, and a more collaborative learning culture.

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