
Report on Design, Operation, and Impact of the Weston Curriculum Instructional Leader (CIL) Model

Background

Weston Public Schools implemented its Curriculum Instructional Leader (CIL) Model during the 2007-08 school year in response to a study conducted by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) in the Spring of 2007. The NESDEC study concluded that the previous department chair/mentor teacher structure should be reorganized to create a stronger link between the goals of the Weston Public Schools with actual practice in all K-12 classrooms and to better meet the anticipated long-term needs of the school district. Specifically, the new CIL Model was seen as a strategy for:

- Increasing instructional coaching for classroom teachers
- Monitoring and supporting curriculum implementation
- Facilitating greater collegiality among school staff
- Promoting analysis and use of student performance data to inform instruction and curriculum development
- Advancing district initiatives to improve teaching and learning

The CIL positions have been reconfigured several times since their original establishment. The table below lists the configuration of the CIL positions during current (2016-17) school year.

Curriculum Instructional Leaders	Grade Levels	FTE
Language Arts/Social Studies	K-2	0.5
Language Arts/Social Studies	3-5	0.5
Math/Science	K-5	1.0
English	6-12	0.5
Math	6-12	0.5
Science/Technology	6-12	0.5
Social Studies	6-12	0.5
Music	K-12	0.4
PE/Health	K-12	0.4
World Language	K-12	0.4
Visual Arts	K-12	0.2

Purpose of the Report

In November 2016, Weston Public Schools contracted with Noe J. Medina of Education Policy Research, an education consultant based in Boston, to conduct an independent review of the Weston CIL Model and prepare a written report for the Weston Board of Education. This evaluation focused on the following purposes:

- Identifying and describing the current range of activities and services conducted by the CIL's
- Documenting the impact of the CIL model on the quality and alignment of curriculum, the quality of teaching, and the achievement of the district and school instructional goals
- Presenting recommendations for improving the design and operation of the CIL model

In preparing this report, the consultant reviewed a variety of written documents related to the goals of the school district or the CIL model. This included:

- Summary of the 2007 NESDEC report
- Weston Board of Education motions from 2007 established the CIL Model
- Current CIL Job Description
- Annual Instructional Update for 2015-16 presented to the Weston Board of Education Curriculum Committee
- Report presented to the Weston Board of Education highlighting student performance for the 2015-16 school year
- "Assessing What Matters: Our District's Journey to Teach and Assess What We Value Most" (a 2016 article written by Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent, on the accomplishments of the Weston Public Schools)

The consultant also conducted a series of meetings and focus group discussions with key stakeholders in the district on January 26, February 23, and February 24, 2017. Discussions were conducted with:

- Members of the Weston Board of Education
- Superintendent and district administrators
- Principals and Assistant Principals from all four Weston schools
- Curriculum Instructional Leaders
- 35 teachers representing all four schools and all subject areas

Discussions were from 60 to 90 minutes and focused on a series of questions that were prepared by the consultant and shared with the group prior to the discussion.

Finally, the consultant administered two online surveys – one to the CILs and the other to all teachers in the district. The survey for the CILs included 16 multiple-choice or short answer questions. The survey for the teachers included 15 multiple-choice or short answer questions. All surveys were completed during March 2017. The survey for CILs was completed by 10 of the 11 CILs. The survey for teachers was completed by a total of 167 teachers including:

- 31 teachers at Hurlbutt Elementary School
- 33 teachers at Weston Intermediate School
- 40 teachers at Weston Middle School
- 54 teachers at Weston High School
- 9 teachers working at multiple schools

Instructional Roles

Instructional Coaching

Finding: All CILs provided instructional coaching to some of their assigned teachers. The number of teachers coached, the teachers selected to receive coaching, the nature of the coaching, and the success in engaging teachers in a coaching relationship varied among the different CILs based on their other responsibilities, their level of experience, their approach to coaching, and decisions by school leaders.

Interviews and surveys of the CILs revealed a high degree of variability in how many teachers they coached this year. Some CILs reported coaching only a handful of teachers (5 or less) while others reported working anywhere from 15 to 25 teachers during the last year. In some cases, this reflected greater involvement by a CIL in curriculum development and implementation work. In other cases, it reflected a lack of experience in coaching.

There was also some variability in who they coached. Some CILs focused exclusively on new teachers. Others worked with teachers who had approached them for assistance, those they had identified as needing assistance, and those recommended by a school administrator. Still others focused on working with teachers who were curriculum partners or with teacher teams rather than individual teachers. This variability reflected different priorities of school administrators or different approaches to coaching by individual CILs.

According to the teacher survey, 49% of teachers reported receiving some level of instructional coaching from the CIL last year. The proportion was slightly larger in the elementary school (52%) and the intermediate school (59%) and slightly smaller in the middle school (46%) and high school (43%). This was also consistent with the perception of the CILs that elementary and intermediate school teachers were somewhat more open to coaching than secondary school teachers. A substantially smaller percentage of special education teachers (29%) reported receiving coaching from CILs. This was consistent with interview results with administrators, teachers, and CILs.

Based on data reported by the CILs, the length of time that they spent on coaching sessions with teachers varied considerably: 4 reported spending 20 minutes or less; 3 reported spending 30 to 45 minutes; and 3 reported spending 45 to 60 minutes. The results of the teacher surveys also confirmed that coaching sessions were variable in length: 56% reported sessions of 20 to 30 minutes; 16% reported shorter sessions; and 27% reported longer sessions (up to an hour).

To some degree, these differences in the length of time spent on coaching sessions reflected different approaches to coaching. Some CILs focused primarily on classroom observations and feedback. Others combined modeling or demonstration lessons with the observations and feedback. Still others also incorporated goal-setting with the teachers along with the other elements. These differences were confirmed in the results from the teacher surveys. These differences reflected different levels of experience with coaching and different perspectives toward coaching by the different CILs.

CILs were asked on their survey to assess their success in engaging teachers in effective instructional coaching relationships. Half reported that they were successful with “some teachers” while the other half reported that they were successful with “a majority of teachers.” The K-12 CILs reported less success in engaging teachers in coaching than did either the elementary or secondary CILs.

As Table 2 indicates, teachers had a much more positive assessment of CIL success in engaging in effective instructional coaching relationships. Almost half of the teachers reported that CILs were highly successful and 85% reported that they were moderately or highly successful.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	27%	76%	47%	47%	47%
Moderate	58%	17%	40%	36%	38%
Low	15%	7%	13%	18%	15%

General Instructional Support

Finding: All CILs served as an instructional resource and provided informal instructional assistance and support to most of their assigned teachers. This occurred in both individual and team settings.

According to the teacher survey, 80% of all teachers reported communicating or otherwise receiving informal assistance around instruction from a CIL. These percentages were consistently high in all schools: 86% in the elementary school, 83% in the intermediate school, 73% in the middle school, and 78% in the high school.

Recognizing that they had limited time to spend on formal instructional coaching, CILs reported deliberately informal instructional support strategies to reach a larger group of teachers. Communications sometimes occurred by email or phone – either at the initiative of the CIL or in response to a request for information from the teacher. Often, the teacher request was triggered by discussions that occurred in grade level or departmental meetings or more casual conversations in the hallway. CILs emphasized the importance of being “highly visible” in schools so that teachers recognized that they were accessible for assistance and support. In fact, the somewhat lower rate of assistance provided to middle school teachers was attributed to the fact that only one CIL taught or was otherwise based in the middle school.

The assistance provided by the CILs to teachers varied. In some cases, they would assist with problem-solving or clarifying information provided in team meetings or professional development sessions. In other cases, they would provide materials or resources to strengthen or differentiate lessons or units. In still other cases, they would help teachers in interpreting student data or using it to inform instructional decisions.

Curriculum Development & Implementation

Finding: CILs led curriculum development efforts with assistance from a small number of teachers. Subsequently, CILs coordinated and supported implementation of the new curriculum by their assigned teachers. Curriculum development and implementation efforts required CILs to reduce their instructional coaching and general instructional support to teachers.

Curriculum development and implementation was characterized as a “huge responsibility” by the CILs during their interviews. They emphasized that the formal curriculum writing – which generally occurred during the summer in collaboration with a team of teachers – was only the beginning of the curriculum development process. Customization and refinement of the curriculum continued in a variety of settings during the implementation process. They also emphasized that successful curriculum implementation was a complicated and long-term process. Teachers initially needed time to become familiar with the “basics” of the new curriculum. Then they needed additional time to gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum. Moreover, this process progressed at a different pace for different teachers. In addition, curriculum implementation often overlapped with other instructional responsibilities of the CILs, including coaching, instructional support, and professional development. CILs were required to coordinate these various elements and to respond to differences among individual teachers to ensure a successful curriculum implementation effort.

Different CILs also faced different types of challenges during the curriculum development and implementation process. Those CILs work in the elementary and intermediate schools worked with classroom teachers who had experienced implementation of new curriculum in several different subjects sequentially. Fatigue on the part of these teachers due to the introduction of multiple new curriculum was a major threat to successful curriculum implementation. CILs working on the same subject in different schools needed to work together on their curriculum development efforts to ensure effective articulation across the different grade levels. The K-12 CILs had to coordinate curriculum development across multiple grade levels and multiple schools. Both administrators and teachers recognized that these were all critical curriculum development and implementation roles played by CILs.

Professional Development for Staff

Finding: CILs generally organized and periodically delivered professional development for their assigned teachers in a variety of settings.

CILs were expected to organize professional development activities for the teachers in their departments during designated professional development days. These activities typically had to be coordinated with both school and district priorities and plans for these days. At times, the activities were conducted for the entire department but at others were school-based. In many cases, CILs reported facilitating or delivery the professional development activities as well.

CILs would often develop professional development activities to be delivered in other settings as well. This included departmental meetings and grade level meetings. Often, these activities were developed and delivered in support of curriculum development efforts, district initiatives, or effective teaching practices promoted by the CIL.

Other Roles

Administrative Roles

Finding: CILs carried out many of the administrative and leadership responsibilities for their departments as the department chairs that they replaced. This was particularly true for CILs working in the high school. This limited the time that CILs could devote to instructional coaching and support. However, some (but not all) of these responsibilities were necessary to the effective operation of the department and school and there were no other staff available to carry them out.

All CILs reported that they were required to carry out a variety of administrative roles for their departments and within their schools. This included facilitating departmental meetings, budgeting, ordering, and staff hiring. Some were involved with course placements for students or in scheduling student interventions.

The CILs working in the high school reported responsibility for solving problems or managing emergencies within their departments or managing paperwork and forms. In fact, many of these roles were the same that had previously been carried out by the department heads that they replaced.

CILs also served as informal leaders within the elementary and intermediate school and as more formal leaders in the high school. Some also participated as leaders or participants on various teams or groups within each school related to school climate and culture, instructional, student enrichment, and parent outreach – requiring attendance at regular meetings during the day or afterschool.

CILs acknowledged that some of these responsibilities were related to their instructional and curriculum roles or to the effective operation of their department and school – and that there often were no other staff available to carry them out. At the same time, some of these responsibilities were seen as a carryover from the previous management system (particularly at the high school) and suggested that alternatives for managing these roles could be developed.

Reports

Finding: CILs periodically contributed to reports and presentations for district leadership, the Board of Education, and external audiences. Involvement in reporting varied among the different CILs and in different school years. Some of this work helped incorporate the perspectives and experiences of the CILs into the reports. However, this did reduce the time that CILs could devote to instructional coaching and support for teachers.

During interviews, Board of Education members, district and school administrators, and CILs all acknowledged that CILs were asked to contribute to the production of various reports for various audiences. Sometimes, individual CILs were involved and other times, they were involved as a group. Some were annual reports or presentations that occurred on a regular schedule but others emerged on a periodic basis. In these circumstances, CILs were often asked to collect the data, identify and summarize research information, prepare graphics, make presentations, and write

text. Sometimes they were selected for these roles because of their direct involvement in activities or initiatives being reported, but other times they were selected because they were seen as being “available” to assist with the report preparation.

Parent Meetings

Finding: CILs periodically met with parents either with teachers and administrators or on their own. Some meetings related to student course assignments. Others were designed to inform parents about curriculum or instructional changes. Involvement in parent meetings varied considerably among the different CILs and occurred more frequently in the elementary and intermediate school.

Many CILs were called to meet, inform, or otherwise work with parents or the PTO as part of their responsibilities. However, both the nature and level of their involvement in parent meetings varied considerably during the school year and for the individual CILs. Activities included:

- Participation in parent meetings to support teachers or counselors in addressing instructional issues or placement decisions
- Developing and conducting parent education workshops
- Providing resources for parents to support stronger home-school connections
- Making presentations to the PTO
- Informing parents of curricular or instructional changes affecting their children to help them better understand the purpose, nature, and terminology reflected in these changes

According to the results of the teacher survey, more teachers at the elementary school (25%) reported working with CILs on parent meetings than teachers at the intermediate school (13%), middle school (9%) or high school (12%).

District & School Programs

Finding: CILs were regularly involved in the development and implementation of key district initiatives including those related to student assessment and digital learning. Individual CILs were also involved in implementing or supporting school-based programs, particularly those related to student enrichment.

During interviews, administrators reported that CILs played a key role in the past district initiatives focused on promoting broader use of performance assessments with students. CILs were characterized as key individuals in the design of these assessments, in responding to teacher concerns regarding their use, and in reducing teacher resistance to the changes. They continue to play a major role in managing elements of the performance assessment system, including the cornerstone assessment process.

More recently, CILs were also engaged in supporting implementation of the district initiative around digital learning and related cross-curricular efforts. Level of involvement varied by subject area and grade level responsibilities of the CILs. Their support for this initiative was focused primarily on curriculum and instructional integration of these resources while deferring to other school staff around the technology and technical aspects of the effort. According to

results of the teacher survey, 28% of teachers reported working with CILs to implement the digital learning initiative, including 29% of high school teachers, 32% of middle school teachers, 34% of intermediate school teachers, and 14% of elementary school teachers.

In addition to their work on district initiatives, individual CILs were characterized as “highly responsive” to school needs around various types of special programs, particularly those that provided student enrichment opportunities. This included organizing and coordinating various types of student competition or exhibition programs, like the science fair. According to school administrators, most of these programs would not have been sustained but for the leadership of the CILs.

Professional Development for CILs

Training Needs

Finding: CILs generally could benefit from training related to instructional coaching concepts, strategies, and tools, particularly to assist in engaging resistant teachers. Only a few of the current CILs have received training on that subject and it occurred soon after the CIL model was implemented.

In the focus group discussions, CILs consistently expressed a desire to improve knowledge and skills related to instructional coaching. In particular, CILs were interested in strengthening their capacity to engage teachers, particularly resistant teachers, in coaching and to sustain the coaching relationships. Several CILs also saw communication and feedback to teachers as a challenge. Some teachers characterized any form of feedback as “judgmental” and supervisory. Many also feared having any feedback in writing because it could be used in the evaluation process. These CILs sought to learn about new strategies and tools for providing effective feedback to teachers in a coaching context. Some CILs also reported the need for strategies to strengthen the collaborative culture of schools so that teachers would be more willing to work with both CILs and their peers to improve instruction.

A few of the current CILs received professional development in 2009-10 soon after the CIL model was established. That training was provided by Jim Warnock from Research for Better Teaching and focused on having difficult conversations and understanding skillful teaching. There had been no follow-up to that training. In addition, individuals who became CILs after those first few years have not participated in similar training. These differentiated training experiences were seen as a complicating factor that must be taken into account when developing a professional program around instructional coaching for the existing group of CILs.

CILs were much more positive regarding their development of content knowledge in their subject areas. They indicated that various training opportunities existed to support that type of professional development and that the district supported their taking advantage of those opportunities.

Induction of New CILs

Finding: New CILs lacked an induction process or materials that provided orientation and guidance to their positions. Most reported learning about their positions on their own and from colleagues.

Induction into the CIL position remains an informal process that relies on new CILs to learn from their peers and their own experiences. There is no formal orientation and training program. Nor are there any manuals or materials providing guidance to the requirements of the positions or to approaches, strategies, or tools that can be used to carry out its roles. CILs report that this does create a substantial learning curve when they take on the position.

Despite the lack of a formal induction process and recent professional development opportunities related to instructional coaching, the CILs believe that there is “considerable wisdom” within the current group of CILs. Because CILs had a history of successfully providing informal support to their peers and sharing ideas, they expressed interest in developing more formal structures for identifying, documenting, and sharing effective responses to shared problems of practice. This was seen by the CILs as a strategy that could be incorporated both into a formal induction process for new CILs and an ongoing professional development program for all CILs.

Communication & Collaboration

Confidentiality in Instructional Coaching

Finding: All CILs recognized the importance of maintaining confidentiality and trust in their instructional coaching relationships with teachers. In practice, confidentiality was challenging to consistently maintain and teachers expressed some level of suspicion on this issue.

During the focus group discussions, the CILs explicitly acknowledged that maintaining confidentiality regarding their coaching interactions with teachers had been essential to making the CIL role successful. They emphasized that it was critical that the role of supervisor and coach was distinguished to administrators and teachers. This conclusion was consistent with most of the research on instructional coaching and the recommendations of experts in the field. Research indicates that the level of trust needed to establish and maintain effective coaching relationships is undermined if instructional coaches also serve as supervisors.

At the same time, several CILs identified the issue of confidentiality as one of the most challenging aspects of their work for several reasons. While teachers are told and accept that CILs are not supervisors, they also recognize that CILs communicate regularly with school administrators who are their supervisors. According to several teachers, this does create some level of suspicion on their part. Moreover, some CILs reported that getting appropriate assistance and support for struggling teachers that they were coaching could be more difficult due to their need to maintain confidentiality. Finally, some school administrators challenged the notion of confidentiality in the coaching relationship and wondered whether CILs might not be more effective in working with teachers if they were also in a supervisory role. As noted above, this view conflicts with most of the research on instructional coaching which recommends that instructional coaches not serve as supervisors. These comments from CILs, teachers, and

administrators suggest the need for additional internal discussions regarding the issue of confidentiality to ensure a shared understanding of its value and purpose and specific strategies for its maintenance.

Communication with District & School Administrators

Finding: All CILs regularly communicate with both district and school administrators individually and in group meetings. As a result, CILs are seen as facilitating communication between teachers, district administrators, and school administrators. Both district and school administrators are generally seen as knowledgeable and supportive of the work of the CILs.

In their survey responses, the 7 elementary and secondary CILs reported meeting regularly with school leaders. All 7 reported meeting with the principal on a weekly basis and 4 of 7 reported meeting with Assistant Principals on a weekly basis. The other 3 reported meeting with Assistant Principals on a monthly basis. All of the K-12 CILs reported less frequent contact with both Principals and Assistant Principals because they were required to split their time across four schools. Similar statements were also expressed by the school administrators.

CILs generally reported that administrators were knowledgeable about the purposes and requirements of the CIL positions: 9 of 10 CILs agreed with that statement regarding district leaders and 8 of 10 agreed regarding school leaders. While the 3 elementary CILs agreed that teachers were also knowledgeable about the purposes and requirements of their position only 1 of the 7 secondary and K-12 CILs agreed with that statement.

Both district and school leaders were seen by the CILs as “fully supportive” of their work. Every CIL agreed with that statement regarding both district and school leaders – 7 of 10 strongly agreed with that statement for district leaders and 5 of 10 strongly agreed for school leaders.

CILs were characterized by administrators and teachers as playing key intermediary roles within the district. They were seen by teachers as facilitating two-way communication between teachers and district administrators. They were also seen by administrators as facilitating communication and mediating misunderstandings or conflicts between district and school administrators. In addition, CILs were seen by administrators as sources of content expertise to help administrators improve the quality of their observations of classrooms and teaching.

Hiring & Evaluation

Part-time Position

Finding: Most CILs have part-time positions as teachers. Although this conflicts with the recommendations of most researchers that instructional coaches should be full-time positions, CILs generally approved of this arrangement.

CILs who served as part-time teachers acknowledged that they faced ongoing tensions in carrying out the responsibilities associated with both positions. Nevertheless, they consistently valued the dual positions. CILs reported that their teaching responsibilities kept them “grounded in the classroom” and provided them with greater credibility to teachers. In focus group discussions, both administrators and teachers expressed similar views.

Hiring Process

Finding: CILs are appointed for a term of two school years. In practice, most CILs are routinely reappointed to their positions until they decide to step down. Nevertheless, CILs encouraged lengthening the term to better reflect the requirements of the position.

The two-year term for CILs was originally established to encourage teachers to cycle through the position and return to the classroom. This was seen as a way for the CILs to remain connected to the day-to-day requirements of teaching. In fact, most CILs split their time between their CIL role and a teaching position. As such, the connection with the classroom remains without the two-year term.

CILs also noted that the two year term did not reflect the requirements of the position. Two years is not enough time for the CILs to learn about instructional coaching and practice the skills that make them more effective coaches – even with an induction and professional development program to shorten the learning curve. CILs also need to learn about curriculum development and implementation. Finally, CILs need to build effective working relationships with administrators, their peers, and their assigned teachers.

Evaluation Process

Finding: The district does not have an evaluation rubric or process that is specifically designed to evaluate the work of the CILs.

Currently, CILs are evaluated using the rubric and process used for teachers with some informal adjustments. This approach does not establish specific standards of performance or evidence to evaluate the specific elements of the CIL work including instructional coaching, instructional leadership, curriculum development and implementation, professional development, and departmental management. As a result, it does not provide either CILs or their supervisor sufficient insights into their strengths or their areas for improvement.

Impact of CIL Model

Instructional Practices

Finding: The CIL model has succeeded in promoting adoption of new instructional practices, strategies, and approaches by a substantial majority of Weston teachers.

Teachers were asked to assess the success of the CILs in promoting their effective use of new instructional practices, strategies, or approaches. As Table 3 indicates, half of the teachers across the district reported a high level of success and 86% reported either a high or moderate level of success. Although the reported success rate was the highest in the intermediate school, the impact of the CIL work was consistently large in all four schools.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	38%	69%	49%	48%	50%
Moderate	53%	25%	30%	33%	36%
Low	9%	6%	22%	19%	14%

Curriculum

Finding: The CIL model has succeeded in strengthening the quality, rigor, and alignment of the subject area curricula in Weston schools.

Teachers were asked to assess the overall impact of the CIL positions in improving the quality and rigor of subject area curriculum used in Weston schools. Table 4 indicates that more than half of the teachers rated overall impact as high and 92% rated it as moderate or high. Responses were consistent across all four schools.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	56%	64%	61%	56%	58%
Moderate	35%	28%	28%	38%	34%
Low	9%	8%	11%	6%	8%

Teachers were also asked to assess the overall impact of the CIL positions in promoting greater alignment of the subject area curricula across grade levels. As Table 5 indicates, almost two-thirds rated the impact as high and 93% rated the impact as moderate or high. Impact was greatest at the intermediate school.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	53%	77%	69%	63%	65%
Moderate	35%	17%	22%	31%	28%
Low	12%	6%	8%	6%	7%

Finally, teachers were asked to assess the success of CILs in promoting their effective use of new or revised curriculum or curriculum units. According to Table 6, more than half of the teachers

reported a high level of success and 85% reported moderate or high levels of success. Teachers in the intermediate school reported much higher levels of success than in the other three schools. This was consistent with more positive responses for that school for several of the other instructional and curriculum outcome measures.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	55%	72%	51%	44%	53%
Moderate	33%	22%	27%	37%	32%
Low	12%	6%	22%	19%	16%

The teacher survey results regarding curriculum development and implementation were consistent with comments by administrators and teachers during the focus group discussions. CILs were characterized as playing “critical roles” in the successful adoption of the new curriculum – both initially and on an ongoing basis. They were also seen as key in connecting curriculum across grades within a school and across schools – either by working together or by overseeing the process across several schools.

Data Use

Finding: The CIL model has succeeded in promoting regular use of student data by teachers to guide and inform their instructional decisions in the classroom.

Teachers were asked to assess the overall impact of CIL positions in promoting regular use of student data by teachers to guide and inform their instructional decisions. Almost half rated the impact as high and 90% rated the impact as moderate or high. Teachers in the intermediate and elementary school reported a greater impact on data use than did teachers in the high school or middle school. However even in the middle school, overall impact was substantial – with 77% of teachers in that school rating the impact as moderate or high.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	56%	67%	33%	44%	49%
Moderate	35%	28%	44%	50%	41%
Low	9%	6%	22%	6%	10%

Digital Learning Initiative

Finding: The CIL model has succeeded in promoting the district’s Digital Learning Initiative in most schools.

Teachers were asked to assess the overall impact of the CIL positions in advancing the district's ongoing District Learning Initiative. Although two-thirds of the teachers reported a moderate to high overall impact, this level of impact was somewhat smaller than reported for the other outcomes examined (instructional practices, curriculum, and data use). This result was not surprising because CILs were generally seen as playing a support role rather than the lead role in this initiative working with other staff in the schools. The overall impact was also diminished because implementation of the initiative at the elementary school is at an earlier stage – so the overall impact in that school was considerably smaller.

	Hurlbutt ES	WIS	WMS	WHS	All Schools
High	18%	56%	43%	51%	43%
Moderate	29%	14%	27%	31%	26%
Low	53%	31%	30%	18%	31%

Recommendations

CIL Roles & Responsibilities

While many of the administrative, reporting, and other responsibilities carried out by CILs are appropriate and essential for the effective operation of their departments and schools, they nevertheless require the CILs to divert time away from instructional coaching and support of teachers, curriculum improvement, and work with teacher teams. Evidence presented in this report indicated that CILs work on curriculum and instruction significantly advanced district goals and improved teaching.

As a result, district and school administrators should critically assess the non-instructional responsibilities of CILs to ensure that they are necessary and cannot be otherwise fulfilled. To accomplish this, district and school administrators should meet with CILs to conduct a critical review of their non-instructional responsibilities. This meeting will also have the additional benefit of ensuring the district and school administrator develop a better understanding of the full range of responsibilities carried out by CILs in each school.

Job Descriptions

Currently, the district employs the same job description for all CIL positions. However, the responsibilities of the different CIL positions vary. The greatest distinctions exist between the grade K-5 positions, the grade 6-12 positions, and the K-12 positions. However, important distinctions also exist between different subject areas. The district should develop revised job descriptions for each CIL position to more accurately reflect its specific responsibilities.

Term of CIL Positions

The school district should consider extending the appointment to a CIL position from 2 years to 4 years. This would more accurately reflect the time required to learn the position – even with the implementation of a more structured induction process and support materials. It would also more accurately reflect the time required for CILs to build effective coaching and instructional support relationships and to develop and implement new curricula in their subject areas and assigned schools.

Evaluation Process for CIL Positions

The school district should establish an evaluation rubric and process specifically for the CIL positions. The rubric should address the various core tasks required of CILs, including instructional coaching and support for teachers, curriculum development and implementation, professional development, school leadership, and departmental management. The process should incorporate evidence regarding the work of the CILs from school administrators and teachers.

Confidentiality of Coaching Relationship

The district should develop a written policy guaranteeing confidentiality in the coaching relationship between CIL and teacher. The policy should articulate both the purposes of confidentiality and the research evidence documenting its importance. The policy should be developed with input from administrators, teachers, and CILs. After the written policy is released, it should be reviewed and discussed in departmental and school-based meetings to ensure shared understanding among all stakeholders.

Induction of New CILs

The district should establish an induction process for all new CILs. The process should be designed to accelerate the learning curve for new CILs regarding their roles and responsibilities. The process should include orientation to the new position by an experienced CIL. It should also provide written, audio, and video resources that provide the new CIL information, strategies, and tools for providing instructional coaching, conducting curriculum development and implementation, and organizing and delivering high-quality professional development for teachers.

Professional Development for CILs

The district should provide an ongoing professional development program for all CILs. The program should initially focus on instructional coaching issues, including engaging teachers into coaching relationships, maintaining confidentiality in coaching, providing instructional coaching in individual and group settings, and providing effective feedback to teachers. The program should build understanding of CILs on these topics and provide them with strategies and tools to effectively carry out the instructional coaching work. The program should ensure that all CILs develop a common level of knowledge and understanding while providing some differentiation to reflect the different levels of knowledge and need that individual CILs bring to the training.

Opportunities for Peer Support

To support the professional development program and leverage the wisdom and experience shared by the current group of CILs, the district should bring CILs together periodically to examine shared problems of practice. Specific problems should be identified for discussion during each meeting and shared inquiry protocols should be used to guide the discussions. Effective practices identified during the meeting should be documented for use and further refinement by individual CILs.