

Evaluation Report

Five District Partnership Instructional Coaching Project

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Project Overview

The Five District Partnership (5DP) includes five urban school districts in Massachusetts: Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, and Winthrop. The vision of the 5DP is to collaborate around four central areas to improve its collective ability to raise student achievement. These four central areas include high-quality instructional resources, professional growth & development for teachers, educator relationships, and efficiency & fiscal prudence. The 5DP provides opportunities for collaboration at all levels – from teachers and curriculum directors to principals and superintendents.

In 2016, the 5DP received a Massachusetts Network Initiative Grant from the New Venture Fund supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. To help implement this grant-funded initiative, the 5DP contracted with Research for Better Teaching (RBT), a Massachusetts-based professional development organization.

RBT project activities provided to the 5DP drew upon two of RBT's established program models, Coaching for Sustainable School Improvement (CSSI) and the Data Coaching Program. The CSSI professional development program was offered to instructional coaches across four districts (Chelsea, Everett, Malden, and Revere). The Data Coaching Program along with on-site support by RBT staff was conducted in five pilot schools (one from each of the five districts in the 5DP).

Before it began to deliver services to the 5DP, RBT staff conducted comprehensive needs assessments and orientation sessions with district and school leaders and instructional coaches in the five districts. This included meetings, individual interviews, focus group discussions, and administration of written surveys. The results of these efforts helped inform the design of the project activities and provided baseline data for RBT staff in their work with the individual pilot schools and districts.

The CSSI professional development program included six full-day training sessions conducted in June, August, October, and November 2017. This included three sessions on the partnership approach to coaching, one day on ELL coaching, one day on ELA coaching, and one day on math coaching. A seventh full-day session was conducted in May 2018 and allowed participants to share what they had learned with their peers through case study presentations and breakout discussions. In addition to the training sessions, RBT staff also conducted webinars and follow-up sessions for the instructional coaches and administrators from the districts. The CSSI program involved 53 instructional coaches, including 19 from Chelsea, 6 from Everett, 4 from Malden, and 24 from Revere.

The three-day Data Coach training program was conducted by RBT with 40 administrators, instructional coaches, and data team leaders in each of the five pilot schools, including:

- 9 individuals from the Eugene Wright Science & Technology Academy (Chelsea)
- 8 individuals from Madeline English School (Everett)
- 6 individuals from Salemwood School (Malden)
- 7 individuals from Beachmont Veterans Memorial School (Revere)
- 10 individuals from Arthur T. Cummings Elementary School (Winthrop)

In addition to the Data Coach training, RBT staff also conducted two site visits to each of the pilot schools. During each visit, RBT staff conducted observations of data team meeting and met with administrators, instructional coaches, and data team leaders either individually or in groups. These meetings were used to assess the status of instructional coaching and data use in the school and develop ideas or plans for next steps. Where appropriate, RBT staff shared new resources, tools, or materials related either to instructional coaching or data use.

Evaluation Overview

RBT contracted with an experienced independent consultant, Noe Medina from Education Policy Research, to conduct an evaluation of the project. Medina had previously worked with RBT in evaluating the use of the CSSI program and Data Coaching program in other school districts. Medina also had conducted evaluations related to the use of instructional coaches and data teams in other school settings.

The evaluation consultant assisted RBT staff with the initial orientation and needs assessment activities. Specifically, he helped in the development of three surveys as part of the assessment process. This included:

- Assessment Survey for administrators involving 10 multiple-choice and 14 open-ended items focusing on coaching role, communications & support, ELL instruction, and coaching conditions
- Assessment Survey for instructional coaches involving 20 multiple-choice and 20 open-ended items focusing on coaching experience & expertise, coaching role, ELL instruction, coaching activities, and coaching conditions
- Assessment Survey of the pilot schools involving 35 multiple-choice and 12 open-ended items focusing on school culture, structured collaboration, data use, instruction & assessment, ELL instruction, and barriers & needs

All assessment surveys were completed during March and April 2017. Table 1 lists the number of responses to each type of assessment survey from each district.

	Chelsea	Everett	Malden	Revere	TOTAL
Administrator Survey	15	1	4	12	32
Coach Survey	21	18	4	18	61
School Survey	3	5	2	1	11

The evaluation consultant worked with RBT staff to develop the evaluation plan for this project. This plan focused on a series of evaluation questions that assessed both the implementation and impact of the project including:

- How did participants assess project activities including the CSSI training program, the Data Coaching program, and onsite assistance in the pilot schools?
- How successful were instructional coaches in using the practices and strategies presented by the project?
- How successful were the data team leaders in using the practices and strategies presented by the project?
- What impact did the project have on instructional coaching?
- What impact did the project have on the pilot schools?

To collect information to respond to the evaluation questions, the evaluation consultant developed written feedback forms that were administered to project participants after specific project activities. Feedback forms were completed after days 1 and 2, day 3, day 4, day 5, and day 6 of the CSSI training program and after all three days of the data coach training program. The feedback forms were relative short (two pages each). Each included 5 or 6 multiple-choice questions and 3 or 4 open-ended questions that asked participants to assess the session with a particularly focus on the quality of the session, effective of specific training activities, and continuity of the training experience. Participants were also asked to identify what they learned during these sessions, how they used what they learned, and how it affected their instructional coaching or their data team leadership.

Table 2 lists the number of responses to each feedback form from each district during the course of this project.

	Chelsea	Everett	Malden	Revere	TOTAL
CSSI Days 1 & 2	16	2	3	16	37
CSSI Day 3	15	4	3	11	32
CSSI Day 4	8	3	1	15	27
CSSI Day 5	6	3	4	9	22
CSSI Day 6	6	2	2	9	19
Data Coaching	1	7	8	4	20

In June 2018 (after the final CSSI session), the evaluation consultant administered an online written final survey to all participating instructional coaching. This survey included 45 multiple choice and 2 open-ended items asking participants asking for assessments of the CSSI program, changes in knowledge, impact on coaching, and conditions of coaching. A total of 39 instructional coaches completed this survey including 14 from Chelsea, 3 from Everett, 3 from Malden, and 19 from Revere.

In addition to the feedback forms and surveys, the evaluation consultant also met regularly with the RBT and 5DP staff throughout the project to discuss project implementation and impact. He also participated in a meeting at Chelsea with administrators and coaches from that district and conducted telephone interviews with administrators from several districts.

The evaluation consultant also worked separately with 5DP to conduct a series of in-person and telephone interviews with staff from the five pilot schools during March to May 2018. The consultant conducted individual or group interviews with:

- 7 administrators, coaches, and teachers from Chelsea
- 13 administrators, coaches, specialist, and teachers from Everett
- 5 administrators, coach, and teachers from Malden
- 6 administrators, coach, and teachers from Revere
- 8 administrators, coaches, specialist, and teachers from Winthrop

Assessment of CSSI Program

Introductory Meetings & Conversations

In the final survey, instructional coaches were asked whether they agreed that “meetings and conversations with RBT staff prior to the beginning the CSSI program clarified he purposes and expectations for this program.” About two-thirds of that group agreed with the statement and only 10% disagreed. About the same percentage agreed with that statement in each of the school districts. However, a substantially larger proportion (more than 20%) in Chelsea disagreed with that statement. Fewer disagreed in Revere and none did so in Everett and Malden.

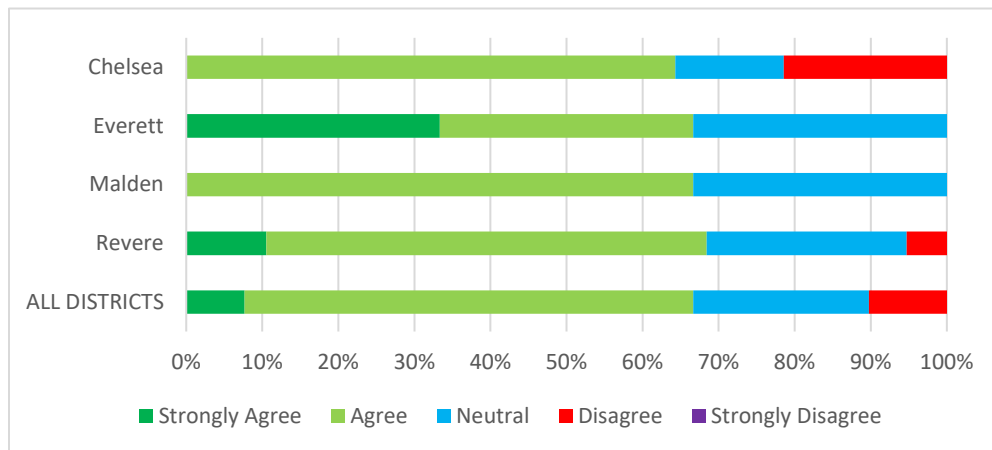


Chart 1. Meetings Prior to CSSI Clarified Program Purposes & Expectations (Level of Agreement on Final Survey)

In the first feedback form, instructional coaches were asked to assess the effectiveness of meetings and conversations with RBT staff in “identifying your needs and those of your school and district regarding instructional coaching.” Malden staff rated these activities as excellent while Everett and Revere staff rated them as good to excellent and Chelsea rated them as good. This was consistent with the results on the final survey.

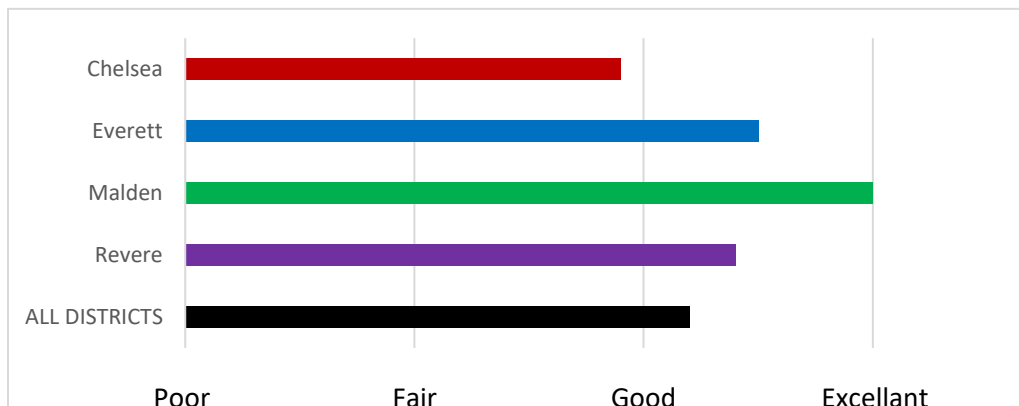


Chart 2. Effectiveness of Needs Assessment & Planning Meetings

Overall Value

On final survey, instructional coaches generally rated the overall value of the CSSI program as high. However, the coaches from Everett rated its value as very high, while those in Chelsea rated it only as moderate.

The final survey also asked instructional coaches whether they would “urge another instructional coach to participate in the CSSI program if the opportunity was available?” All of the Everett and Malden coaches reported that they were likely to do so. Almost all of the Revere coaches (89%) also reported that they were likely to do so. The coaches from Chelsea were more evenly split on that question – 43% reported that they were likely to do so, but 36% responded that it was unlikely. Those Chelsea coaches were the only ones who reported that they were unlikely to urge participation.

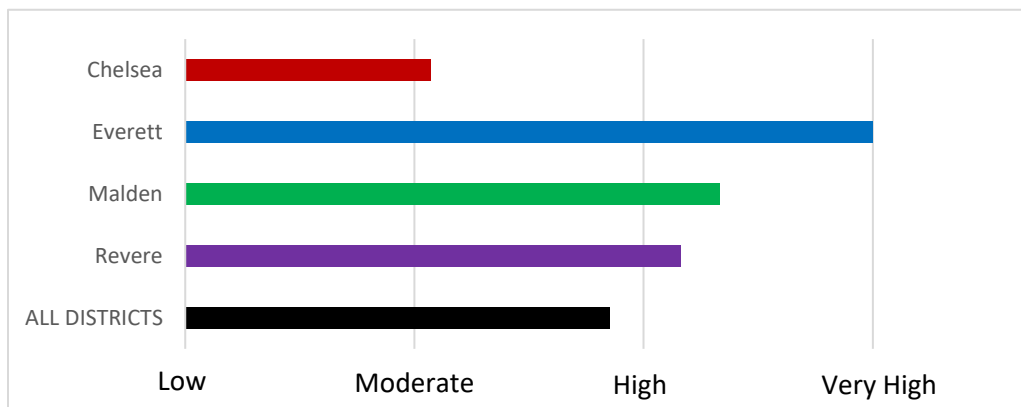


Chart 3. Overall Value of CSSI Program

For each of the six CSSI training days, the participating instructional coaches were asked to assess the effectiveness of the project in achieving its identified purposes and learning targets for that day. On average, days 1, 2, and 4 (discussing the partnership approach to coaching) and day 5 (discussing math coaching) were all rated near excellent by the participating instructional coaches. Day 6 (discussing ELA coaching) was rated good while day 3 (on ELL coaching) received the lowest average ratings from fair to good.

The instructional coaches from Chelsea generally rated the effectiveness of each session lower than did their peers from the other districts, while the coaches from Everett and Malden generally rated the effectiveness of each session higher than their peers from other districts. Ratings by coaches from Revere for each session were similar to the average ratings by all coaches for each session. The results for the individual districts were generally consistent with results on overall value of the CSSI program from the final survey.

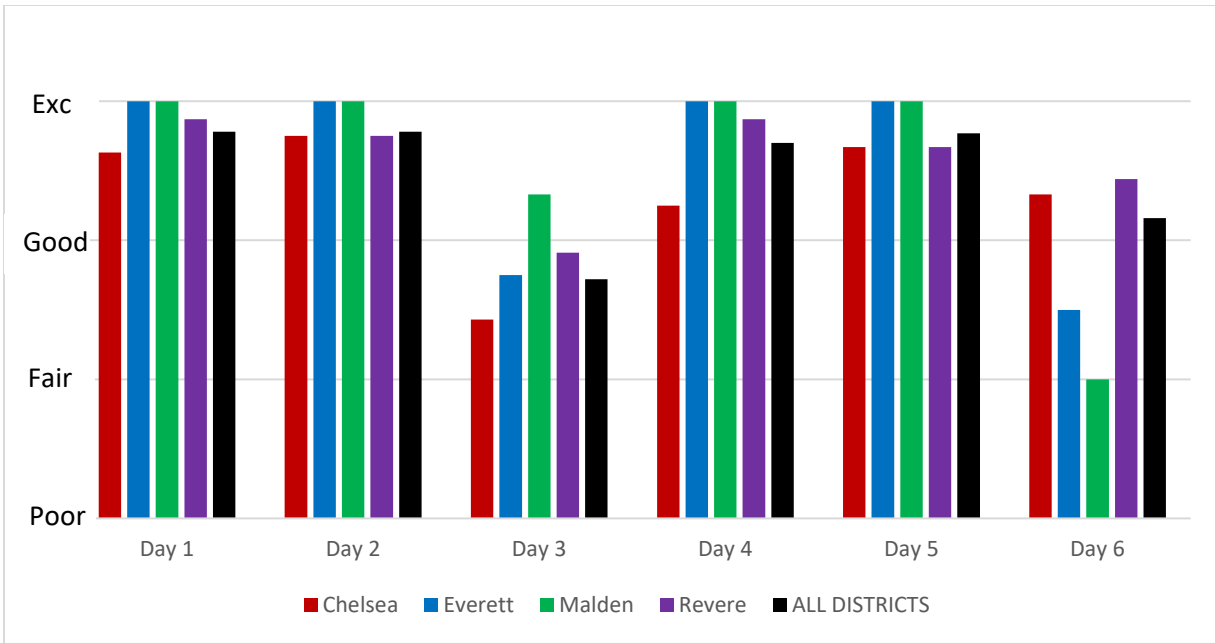


Chart 4. Effectiveness in Achieving Purposes of CSSI Sessions

On the final survey, instructional coaches rated the value of the final CSSI session (including the case study and breakout discussions) as moderate to high. The coaches from Malden were most enthusiastic about the session (rating it very high), just as they were for the overall program and the other sessions. Those from Chelsea were the least enthusiastic (rating it only as moderate. Again, this was consistent with their rating of the overall program.

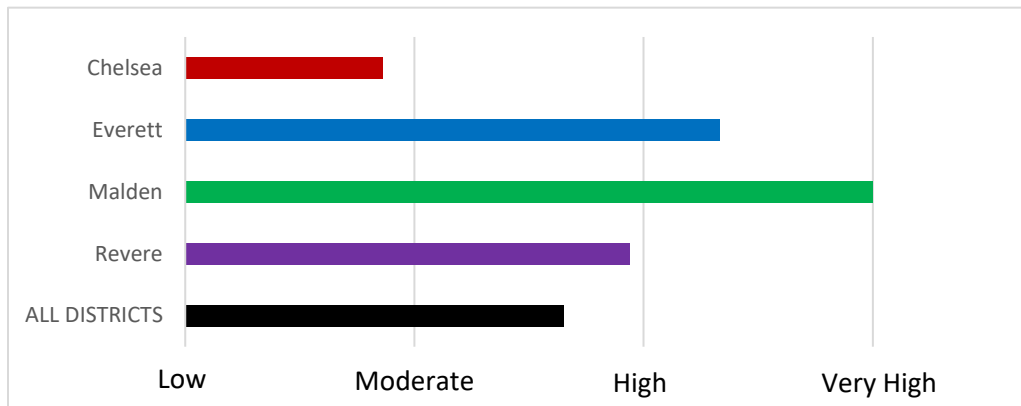


Chart 5. Value of Case Studies & Breakouts During Concluding CSSI Session

Assessment of Specific Topics & Elements

For each of the six CSSI training days, participants were asked to assess the quality of each session in three areas: presenters, materials, and pacing. The results of these assessments followed a similar pattern as the results of the previous assessment. Ratings for days 1, 2, 4, and 5 (discussing the partnership approach to coaching and math coaching) were the highest – good to excellent on all elements. Ratings for day 6 (discussing ELA coaching) were somewhat lower,

although still in the good to excellent range. Ratings for day 3 (discussing ELL coaching) were the lowest of the six days – all in the fair to good range.

In narrative responses on the feedback forms, there were particular concerns raised about the pacing of the sessions during days 1, 2, 3, and 6. In each case, some participants reported that the planned agenda included too many topics. As a result, some topics were not adequately addressed. In addition, some participants suggested that discussions should have been differentiated based on the experience levels of the individual coaches.

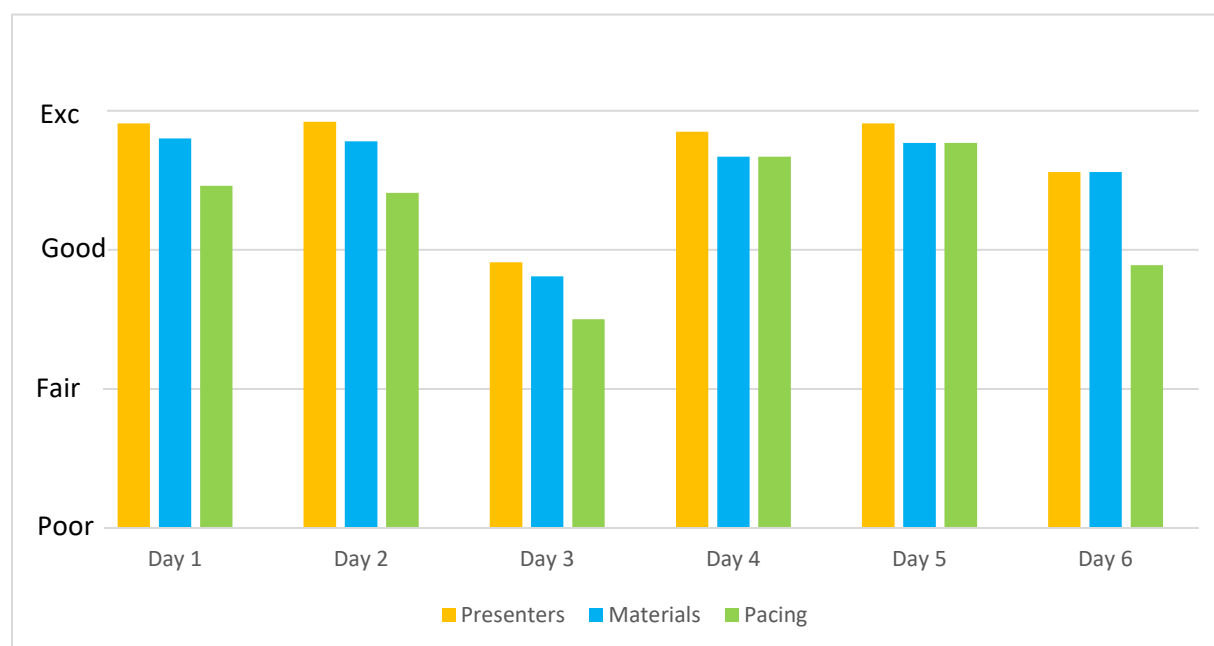


Chart 6. Quality of CSSI Sessions

In the final survey, instructional coaches were asked to assess the value of specific topics presented during the CSSI program. Nine topics were identified: five related to the process of coaching while four related to specific instructional practices or specific subject areas (including ELA, math, and instruction of English Language Learners). In general, the instructional coaches valued the topics related to the coaching process more than those related to subject areas or instructional practices. The one exception was math coaching – which had a relative high rating.

These responses appeared to reflect participants assessment of the quality of training on each topic. Thus, the session on ELL coaching (day 3) had relatively low ratings on all three elements (fair to good) and on reading/ELA coaching (day 6) had moderate ratings (good), while the session on math coaching (day 5) was much higher (excellent). Similarly, responses regarding the sessions addressing the coaching process (days 1, 2, and 4) were consistently in the good to excellent range).

	Chelsea	Everett	Malden	Revere	TOTAL
Coaching Cycle	2.9	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.4
Collaborative Goal-Setting	2.9	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.2
Math Coaching	3.0	3.3	4.0	2.9	3.1
Classroom Observations	2.6	3.7	2.7	3.1	3.0
Partnership Principles	2.4	3.0	3.3	3.1	2.9
Providing Feedback to Teachers	2.4	3.7	3.0	3.2	2.9
Modeling Instructional Strategies & Practices	2.4	3.3	2.3	3.0	2.7
Reading, Literacy or ELA Coaching	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.8	2.5
ELL Coaching	1.2	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.3
4 = Very High Value 3 = High Value 2 = Moderate Value 1 = Low Value					

Instructional coaches were asked their agreement with the following statements:

- Forms, instruments, and other written materials presented during the CSSI program were useful and valuable in their work as instructional coaches
- Homework assignments helped them better understand what was presented and discussed during the CSSI sessions.

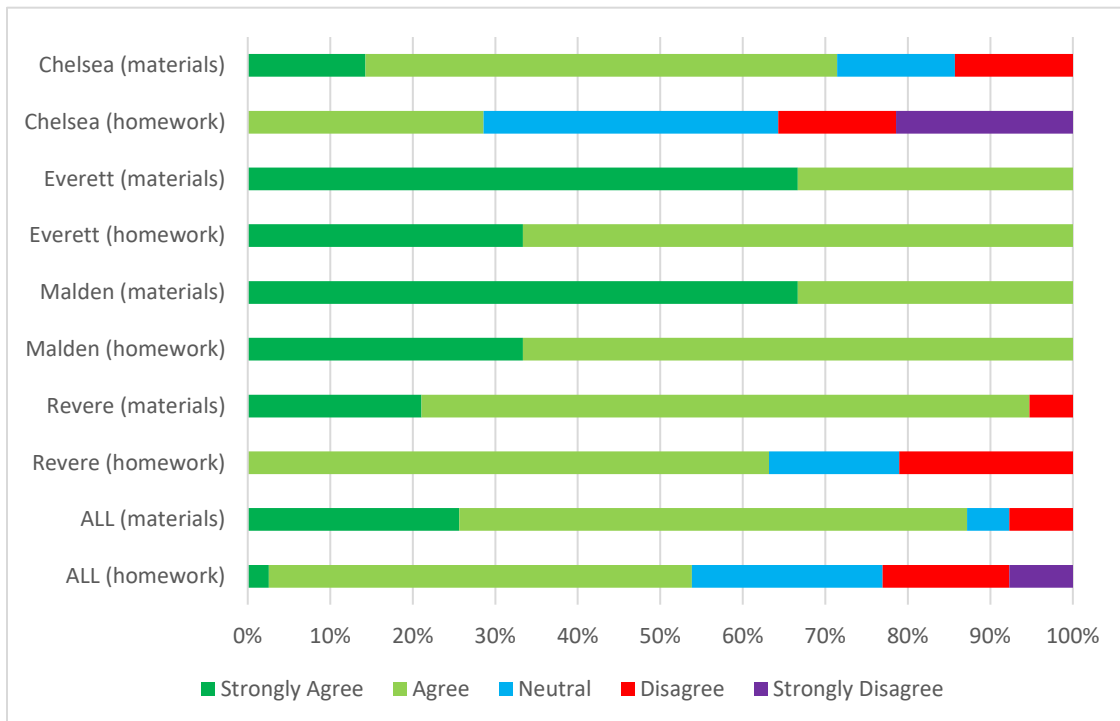


Chart 7. CSSI Written Materials & Homework Assignments Were Useful (Level of Agreement on Final Survey)

The responses regarding the forms, instruments, and other written materials was overwhelmingly positive – more than 85% agreed with this statement and less than 10% disagreed. The responses regarding the homework were mixed – with more than half agreeing but almost one-quarter disagreeing with the statement.

A similar pattern emerged among the districts. While coaches in Everett and Malden were consistently positive about both written materials and homework, they were more strongly positive about materials than homework. In Chelsea, coaches were much more positive about materials (70% agree vs. 15% disagree) than homework (30% agree vs. 35% disagree).

Integrated Learning Experience

In the final survey, instructional coaches were asked about their agreement that CSSI program sessions “connected to and built upon the previous sessions such that the entire series was an integrated learning experience.” Overall, instructional coaches agreed rather than disagreed with this statement by a 3:1 margin. However, Chelsea coaches split evenly on the statement, while coaches in Everett and Malden both strongly agreed with the statement (none disagreed).

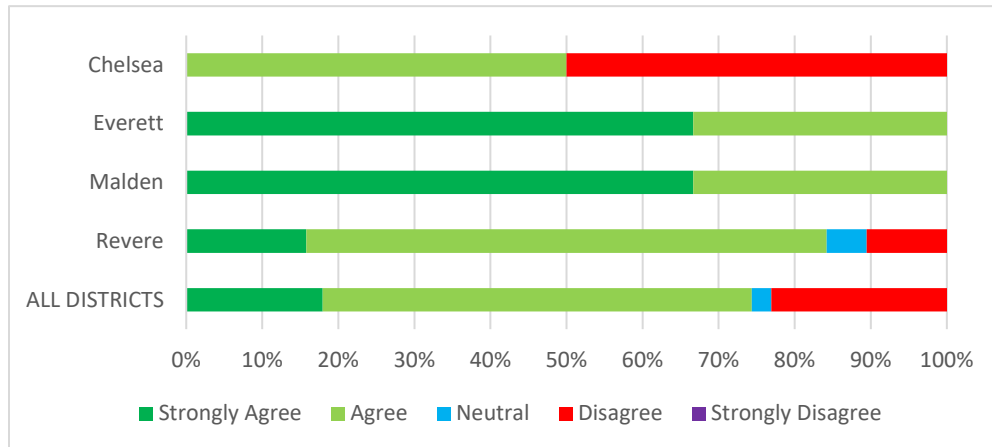


Chart 8. CSSI Sessions Formed Integrated Learning Experience (Level of Agreement on Final Survey)

After the last four CSSI training days, participants were asked to assess the effectiveness of the project in connecting that session to the previous CSSI sessions. As indicated in chart 4 (on the next page), Day 4 (continuing discussions of the partnership approach in coaching) was rated as the most connected to the previous sessions. Days 5 and 6 (discussing math and ELA coaching) were seen as somewhat less connected to previous sessions and day 3 (discussing ELL coaching) was seen as least connected to the previous sessions. Several participants also commented on the need for improving connections between these subject matter discussions (days 3, 5, and 6) and the discussions on coaching methodology (days 1, 2, and 4) in their narrative suggestions for improving the CSSI sessions.

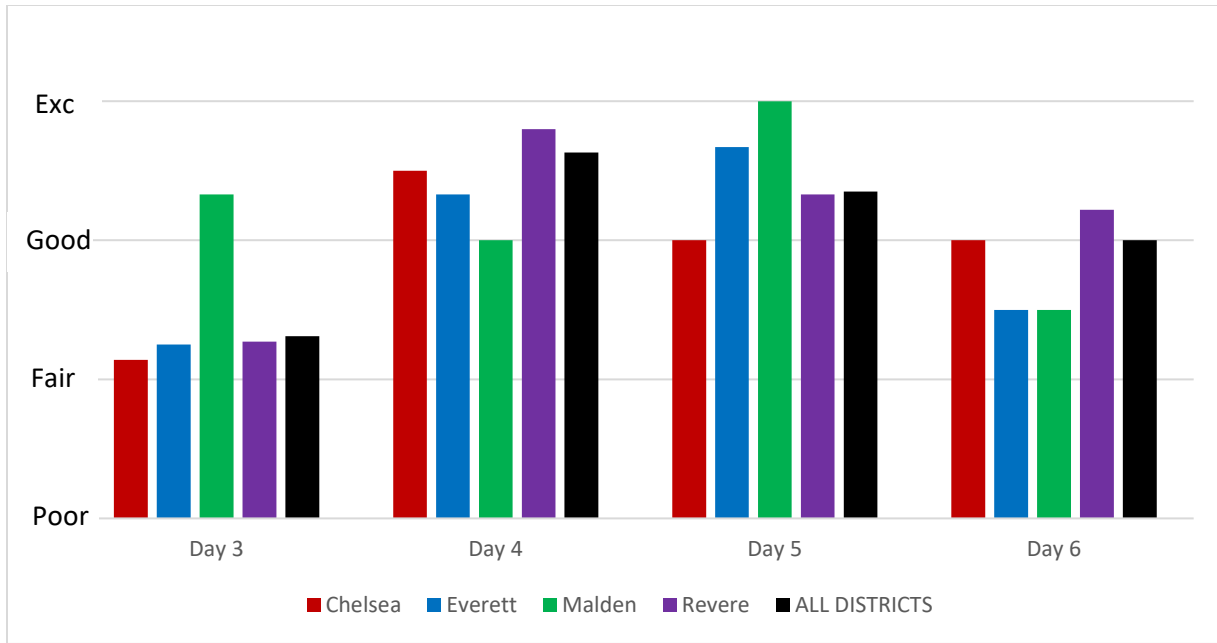


Chart 9. Effectiveness in Connecting CSSI Session to Previous Sessions

Follow-up Sessions & Webinars

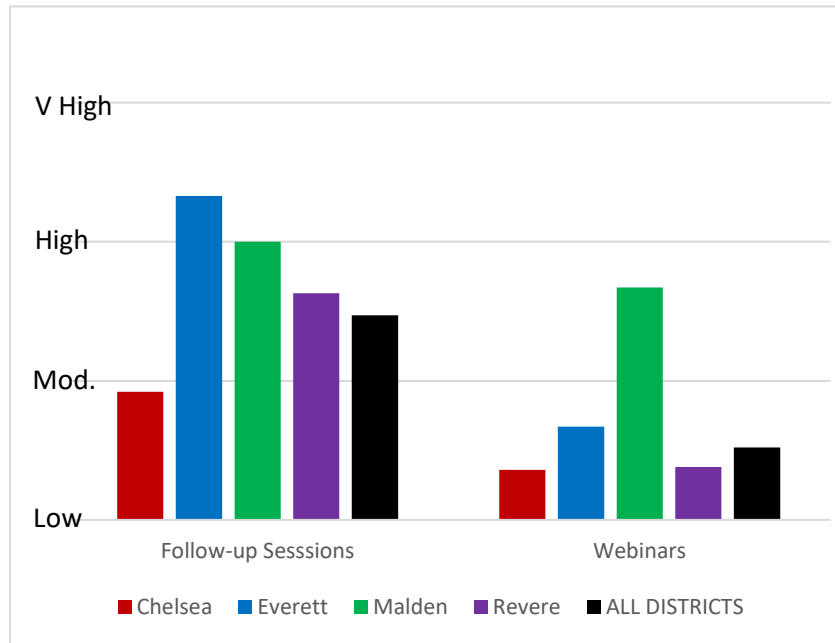


Chart 10. Value of CSSI Follow-up Sessions & Webinars

In the final survey, instructional coaches were asked to assess the value of the follow-up sessions and webinars to their understanding of instructional coaching. Neither set of activities received high ratings. The value of the follow-up sessions were rated as moderate to high, while the value of the webinars was rated as low to moderate.

Assessment of Data Coaching Program

Participants in the data coach training program were asked to complete feedback forms to assess the value and quality of the sessions. Ratings were consistently high for all three days – nearing excellent on overall effectiveness of each session in achieving its purposes and good to excellent on quality of each element (presenters, materials, and pacing). Participants from Malden and Revere were particularly positive in their assessments of these sessions.

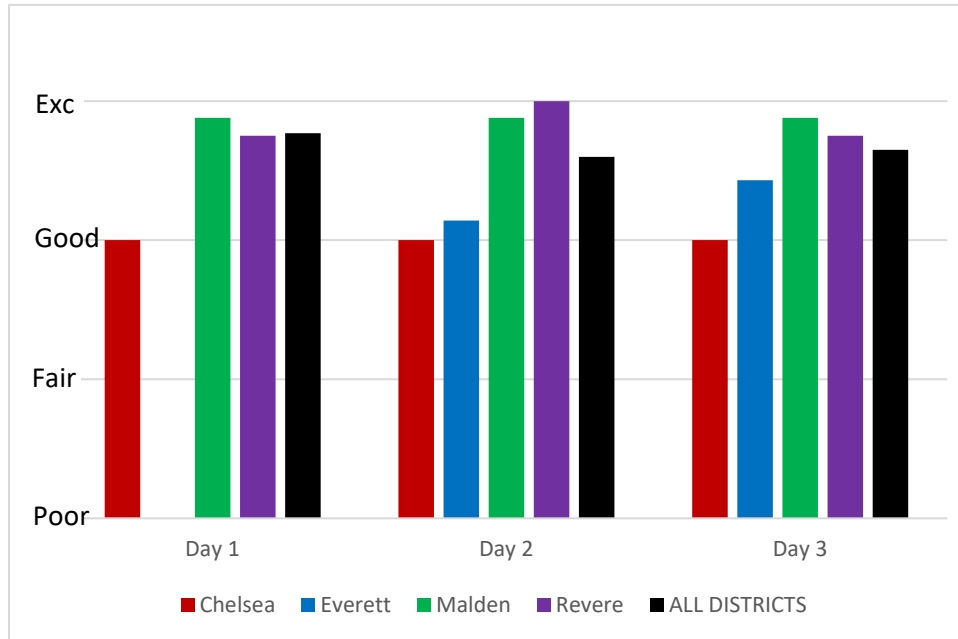


Chart 11. Effectiveness in Achieving Purposes of Data Coaching Sessions

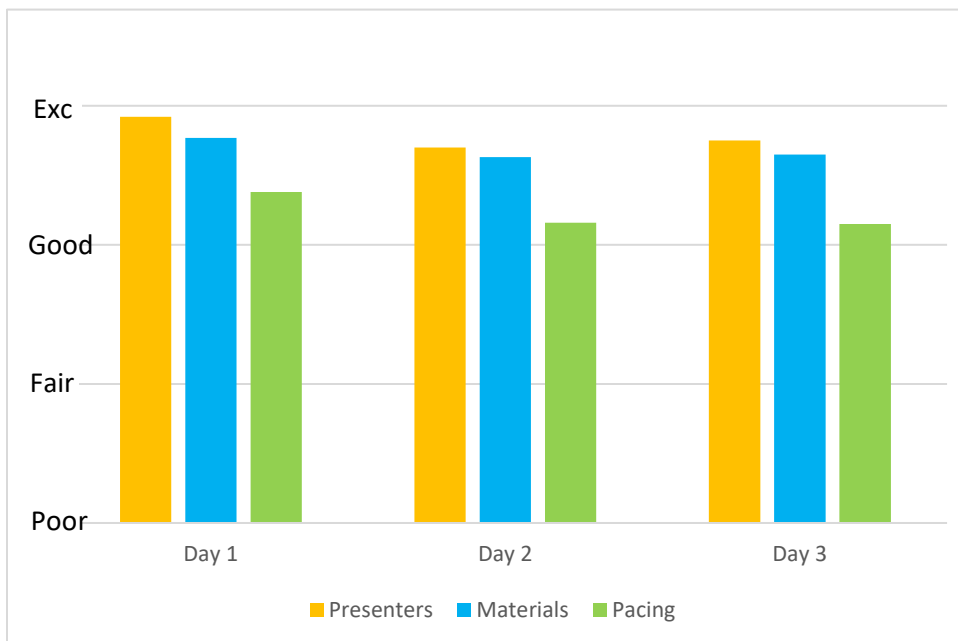


Chart 12. Quality of Data Coaching Sessions

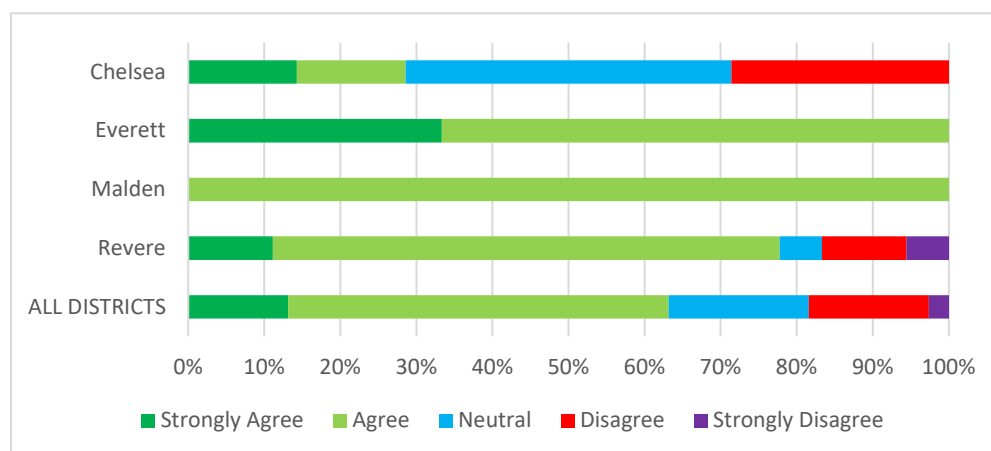
The quality and value of the data coach training was discussed in interviews conducted at the five pilot schools. Participants in the training for all five schools characterized the training as valuable, thorough, and beneficial. The process and protocols presented in the training were described as substantive and very useful. In particular, these tools enabled staff to be more strategic in working with data and to take more ownership of team meetings and data discussions.

The pilot schools also received site visits from RBT staff after the training sessions. These were “greatly appreciated” by school staff and were characterized as important and useful. During these site visits, RBT staff provided practical and relevant strategies and suggestions that were responsive to major implementation challenges facing the schools.

Practices and Conditions Affecting Instructional Coaching

Time

The instructional coaches were asked on the final survey to assess whether sufficient time was available for them to adequately prepare for and provide effective instructional coaching to his or her assigned teachers. More than 60% of the coaches agreed that they had sufficient time. However, almost 20% disagreed with that statement. The responses from coaches in different districts diverged significantly. Those in Everett and Malden all agreed that they had sufficient time. In Chelsea, only 30% agreed with that statement. Coaches in Revere fell between those two groups – with about 75% agreeing with the statement.



*Chart 13. Sufficient Time Provided for Instructional Coaching
(Level of Agreement on Final Survey)*

When asked to comment on problems or challenges associated with the program, 9 of the respondents (approximately one-quarter) submitted narrative comments referring to a lack of time. This is roughly consistent with the responses presented in Chart 13.

Other Tasks

In discussing the issue of time, instructional coaches frequently cited other roles and responsibilities as competing with the instructional coaching role and reducing the amount of

time available for completing these tasks. While some of these responsibilities related directly to instruction (professional development, curriculum development and implementation, data use and analysis, and work with teacher teams), others were characterized as non-instructional. One coach wrote: “Prep times are taken up and it is hard to get through the coaching cycle in a timely manner. Running PD, PLT’s, faculty and department meetings take up my time.” Another reported that “there is not enough time in the day with all the other responsibilities. Coaching is happening, but I need to have more time available.”

On the final survey, instructional coaches were asked specifically whether “administrative or non-instructional tasks frequently interfered with providing effective instructional coaching to assigned teachers.” More coaches agreed than disagreed with that statement (45% vs. 35%). This was true in Chelsea, Malden, and Revere, but not Everett (where none of the coaches agreed with this statement).

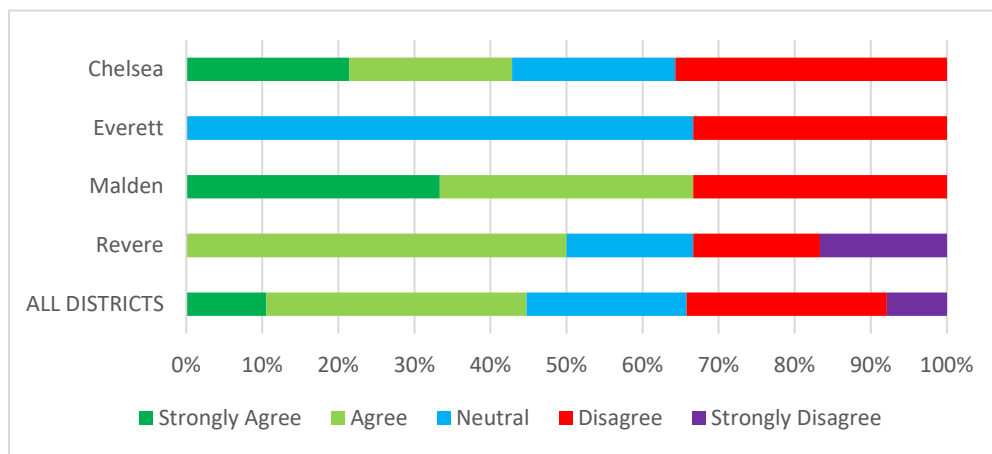


Chart 14. Non-Instructional Tasks Frequently Interfered with Instructional Coaching (Level of Agreement on Final Survey)

Instructional coaches were also asked whether they received appropriate guidance and support from district and/or school leaders in prioritizing their tasks as coaches.

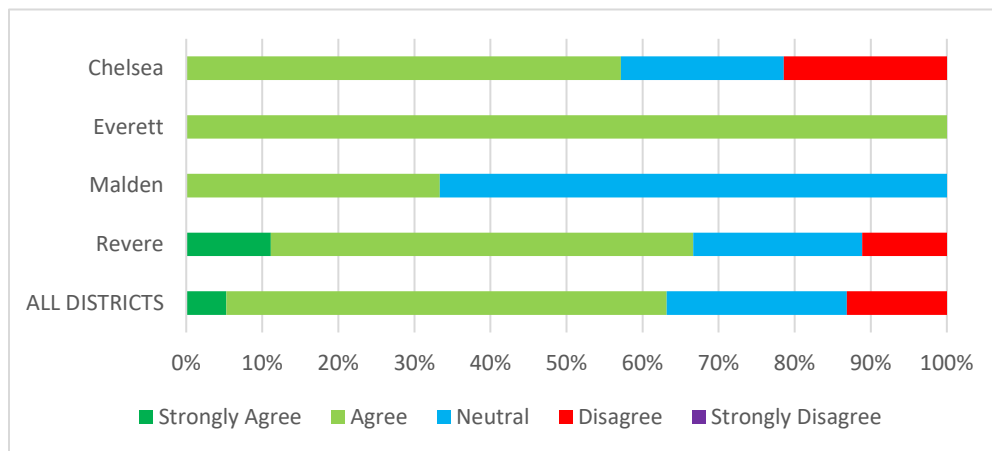


Chart 15. Received Appropriate Guidance in Prioritizing Coaching Tasks (Level of Agreement on Final Survey)

The pattern of responses to this item was similar to the responses related to sufficient time being available for instructional coaching (see Chart 13). Taken together, the responses reported in Charts 13, 14, and 15 suggest that a substantial number of coaches struggled to use the practices presented in the CSSI program to provide effective coaching – both due to the various other roles (particularly non-instructional roles) required of them and the need for greater guidance in prioritizing those roles.

Time management, competing responsibilities, and prioritizing tasks were issues that were consistently identified by the instructional coaches on the feedback forms. When asked to identify problems or challenges with program implementation, 16 participants (about 40%) identified one of these issues in their narrative comments. This was consistent with the responses reported in Charts 13, 14, and 15.

Support of District & School Leaders

The role of district and school administrators was identified by the participating instructional coaches as a significant issue. It was the issue that was identified most often by the coaches when they were asked to identify challenges related to program implementation – with 19 coaches (about half) volunteering this issue in their narrative comments.

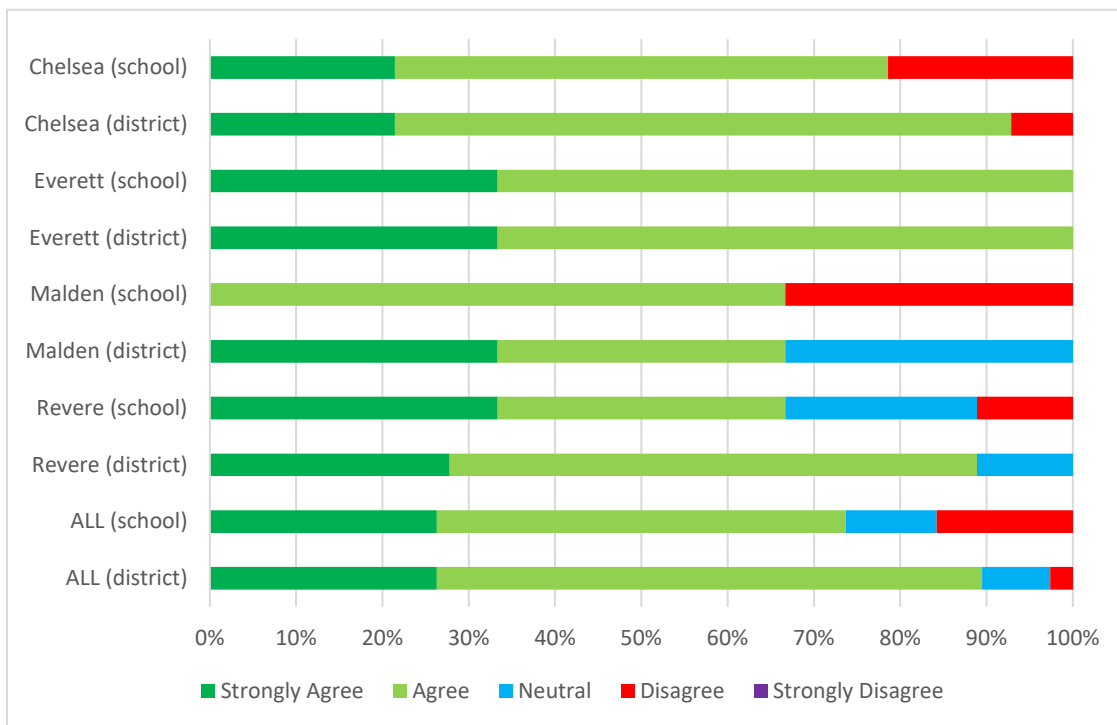


Chart 16. School & District Leaders Supportive of Coaching (Level of Agreement on Final Survey)

The instructional coaches were asked on the final survey to assess the level of support provided by school and district leaders to their work in the schools. A substantial majority of coaches agreed that both district leaders (90%) and school leaders (75%) effectively supported their work. These patterns were consistently reported by coaches in three of the four school districts

(Chelsea, Malden, and Revere). Coaches in Everett all agreed that both district and school leaders provided effective support for this work.

Use of Practices & Strategies

Instructional Coaching

Charts 17 and 18 indicate that instructional coaches used the individual components of the coaching cycle (collaborative goal-setting, classroom observations, modeling of strategies or practices, and conferencing with teachers) with most of their assigned teachers but used the entire coaching cycle with relatively few teachers. Individual coaches reported emphasizing different components of the coaching cycle in their work with teachers.

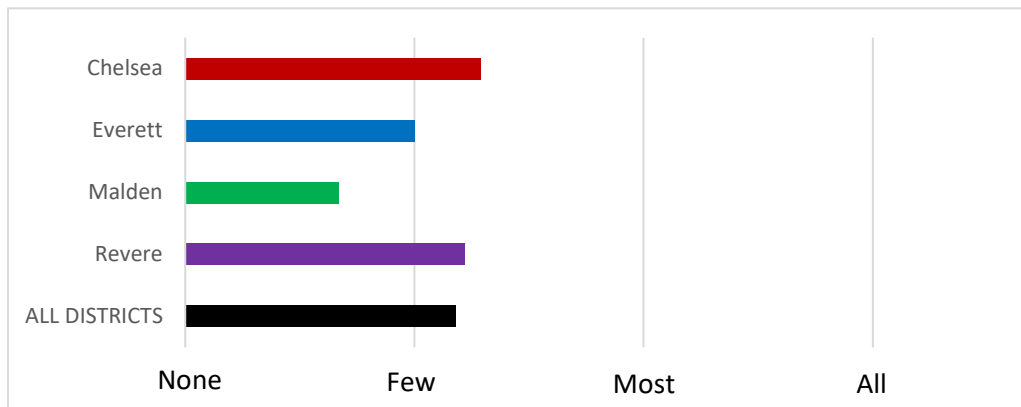


Chart 17. Number of Teachers Participating in Entire Coaching Cycle

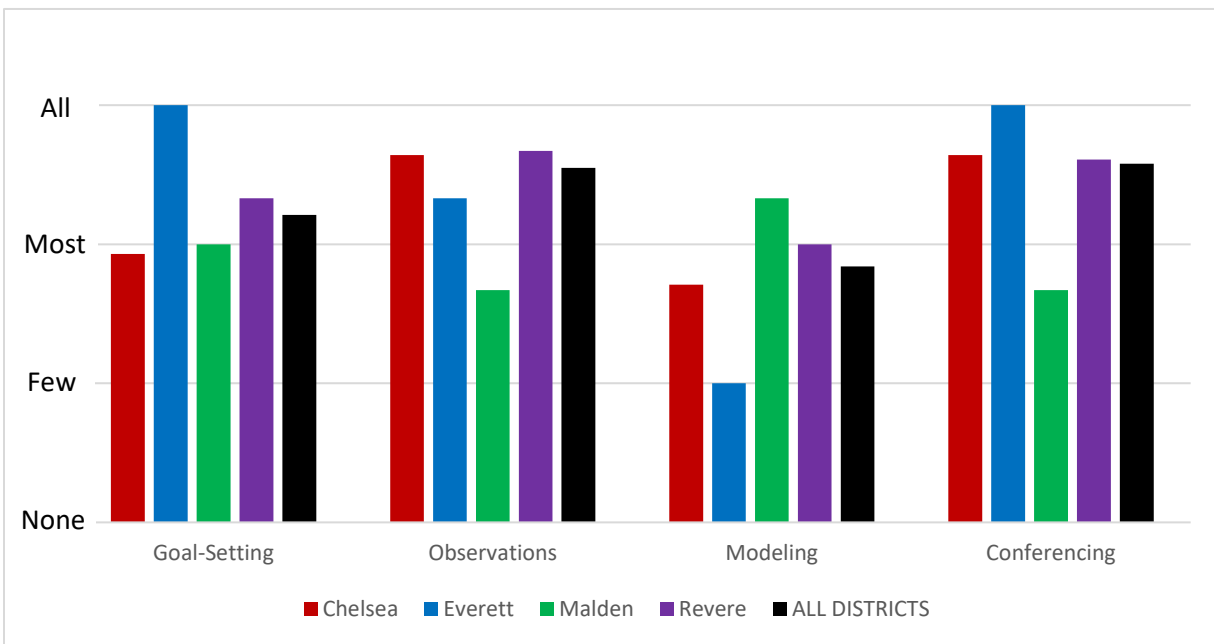


Chart 18. Number of Teachers Participating in Specific Components of Coaching Cycle

During the interviews conducted at the pilot schools, five instructional coaches who participating in the CSSI program provided more information about their use of the coaching cycle and its components in their one-on-one coaching work with teachers. None of the coaches reported using the formal coaching cycle as presented in the CSSI program but three reported that they adapted the cycle for use with their teachers. In each case, these adaptations were made to maintain flexibility in responding to teacher needs. One coach reported that the entire coaching cycle was simply too time-consuming to employ with more than a few teachers.

All the coaches reported using specific components of the coaching cycle with most or all of their teachers. In addition, they reported using the processes and protocols presented in the CSSI program and that these resources helped to strengthen and structure this work. Two of the coaches suggested that the full coaching cycle was not appropriate in responding to the goals and needs of all teachers. When teachers were focused on achieving specific student achievement or engagement goals, the full cycle was seen as most appropriate. However, most teachers were interested in learning to use particular instructional practices, strategies, or approaches. In those cases, they found components of the cycle to be a more cost-effective option. One of the coaches also reported that he found individual teachers either responding to or struggling with different components of the coaching cycle and so would use these components in an iterative manner to move teachers into a more robust coaching experience leveraging more of the coaching cycle.

These coaches also reported that their one-on-one coaching work was effectively complemented by their work with teacher teams. In some cases, the team meetings were used to set the stage for the instructional coaching. In other cases, the team meetings served as venues for providing follow-up to the one-on-one coaching.

These interviews revealed that all of the instructional coaches in the pilot schools found the information presented about the coaching cycle during the CSSI program to be a valuable resource that they integrated into their instructional coaching work. The more experienced coaches described approaches they used to adapt these resources to respond to the conditions of their schools and the needs of their teachers, while the less experienced coaches were looking for guidance to accomplish this.

Video Coaching

The CSSI program introduced the instructional coaches to the use of video in their coaching. Most coaches responded very positively to this approach with more than two-thirds characterizing it as very valuable and the remainder characterizing the approach as somewhat valuable. The coaches reported that a majority of the teachers that they involved in video coaching also had a very positive reaction to the approach.

At the same time, the coaches reported that the process was somewhat time-consuming and that some teachers were resistant or suspicious of the approach. This made it difficult to work with many teachers using this methodology. As Chart 19 indicates, the average coach reported working with only a few teachers using video coaching last year. Nevertheless, 61% of the coaches reported that it was very likely that they will use video coaching with teachers in the future and 32% reported that such use was likely.

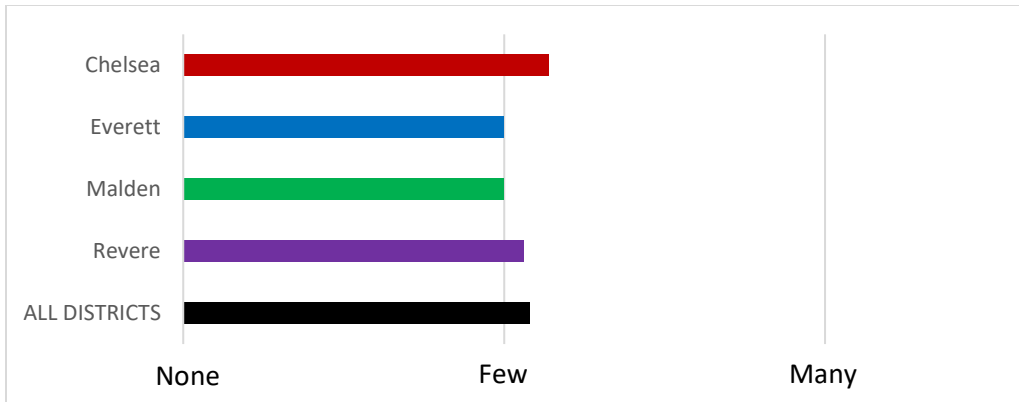


Chart 19. Number of Teachers Participating in Video Coaching

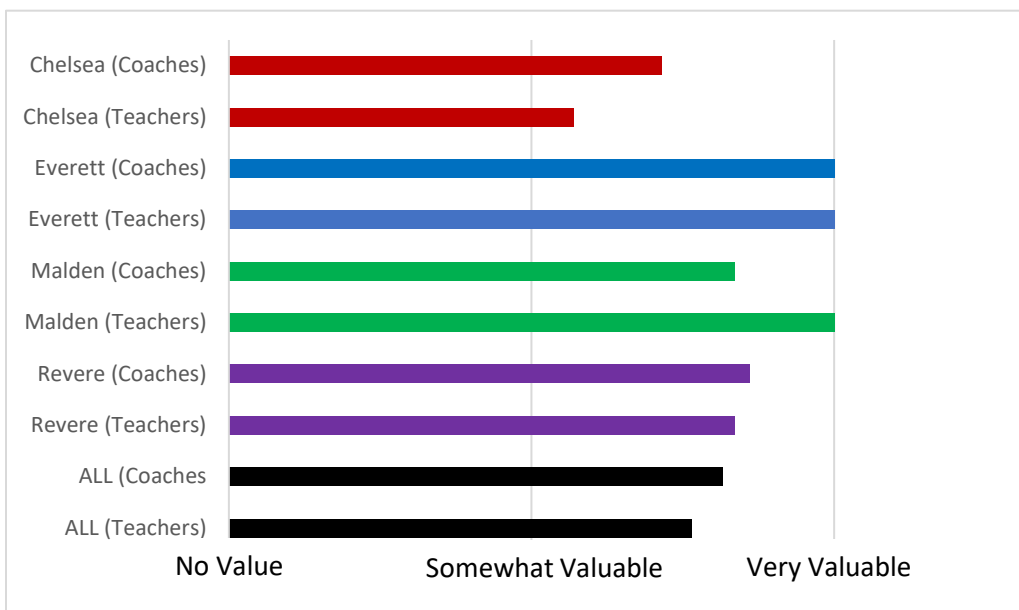


Chart 20. Reaction to Video Coaching by Coaches & Participating Teachers

Coaching Strategies and Practices

In the final survey, instructional coaches were asked to assess their effectiveness in using various coaching strategies and practices presented in the CSSI program. These strategies and practices fell into three categories:

- Moderate use for partnership principles
- Low to moderate use for the coaching cycle, modeling, and identifying student learning & instructional goals with teachers
- Low use for checklists, post-observation conferences, observations after goal-setting, and use of classroom video

Coaches from different districts reported different patterns of use for the different strategies and practices but all reported similar levels of overall use except the coaches from Malden which reported much lower levels of overall use.

	Chelsea	Everett	Malden	Revere	TOTAL
Partnership Principles	2.5	2.0	1.0	2.2	2.1
Coaching Cycle	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.6	1.5
Modeling	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.4	1.5
Identifying Student-Learning & Instructional Goal with Teacher	1.3	2.0	0.8	1.6	1.4
Using Checklists to Help Teachers Get Clear About Instructional Practices	0.8	1.3	0.8	1.4	1.1
Post-Observation Conferences	1.3	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.1
Observations After Goal-Setting	1.0	1.7	0.8	1.0	1.1
Using Classroom Video	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.0
3 = High Use 2+ = Moderate Use 1+ = Low Use 0+ = Not Used					

Data Coaching Protocols & Practices in the Pilot Schools

Although the data coach training by RBT was very well-received by the participants from all five pilot schools, use of the protocols and practices presented in this program varied across the different schools:

- All of the teams in Everett and Revere schools made regular and consistent use of these resources
- All of the teams in the Winthrop school made more limited use of these resources
- Some of the teams in the Malden school and a few of the teams in the Chelsea school made very limited use of these resources

All of the Everett teams regularly and consistently followed all phases of the inquiry cycle and made regular use of the data-driven dialogue and analysis protocols. The process and protocols were characterized as being mutually supportive. Considerable support and guidance was provided by administrators and team leaders to ensure that all teachers understood what the protocols were, how they should be used, and how to use them on their own. Teachers liked using all of the protocols and characterized them as “very useful”, but criteria analysis was specifically mentioned as valuable protocol.

Data-driven dialogue, error analysis, success criteria protocols, and action planning were used consistently by all of the Revere teacher teams. The process and protocols were very well-received by administrators and staff of the school. Staff reported using the processes and protocols in other meetings. Staff expressed a strong commitment to continue to use these processes and protocols in the future. One teacher reported that “data-driven dialogue was very strange and difficult at the beginning of the year, but now it’s second nature to all of us.” These processes and protocols also were successfully integrated with protocols developed by school district for its team facilitators. from the facilitator training (including consultancy, looking at work, and text analysis).

All of the Winthrop teams used portions of the formative assessment inquiry cycle to improve development and increase use of formative assessment results – although there was already a commitment to their use in the school. Teams specifically used error analysis and criteria for success protocols. Both were described by teachers as being “definitely beneficial” in the team meetings and particularly valuable as “ways to better check on how students are doing with lessons and how teachers are doing in teaching their students.” Teachers also reported using these two protocols in their classrooms with their students.

Some but not all of the Chelsea teams used the RBT protocols and practices because some of the teams did not emphasize data use or analysis. One team conducted the data analysis inquiry cycle and use the data-drive dialogue, error analysis, and criteria analysis protocols several times during the year. The team responded very positively to the use of these protocols and practices. Another team adapted elements of the inquiry cycle and integrated tools and protocols from the RBT training program to improve and strengthen this process. The criteria analysis protocol was seen as particularly useful and improved teacher efforts to use data in their instructional decisions.

Very limited use of these practices and protocols by the Malden teams. These tools were seen as unnecessary for literacy instruction because established process had already been developed and used at the school for several years. There was some use made of the data-driven dialogue and formative assessment inquiry cycle in math, but little action planning occurred because the teachers had already moved on to the next unit by the time the analysis was completed.

Impact of Project Activities

Instructional Coaches

Almost 80% of the coaches agreed that participation in CSSI had improved “the overall quality of instructional coaching provided assigned teachers” and almost 30% strongly agreed with that statements. Less than 20% disagreed with the statement.

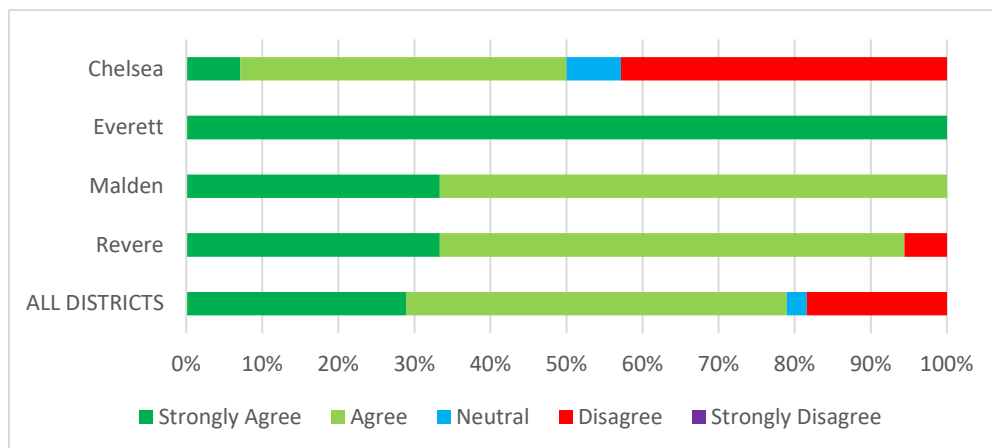


Chart 21. Program Participation Improved the Quality of Instructional Coaching (Level of Agreement from Survey)

The instructional coaches were asked to assess the impact of the CSSI program on their knowledge and understanding related to instructional coaching. They reported a substantially greater impact on their knowledge of coaching process and strategies than on strategies related to instruction in general, in specific subjects, or for ELL students. Overall, coaches reported a moderate to high impact on their knowledge (2.5 on a 4-point scale). Coaches in Everett and Malden reported a high impact (3.3 for Everett and 3.2 for Malden). Coaches in Revere and Chelsea reported a more moderate impact (2.6 for Revere and 2.2 for Chelsea).

	Chelsea	Everett	Malden	Revere	TOTAL
Collaborative Goal-Setting with Teachers	2.8	4.0	3.7	3.4	3.3
Creating Student-Centered Coaching Goals	2.5	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.1
Listening, Questioning & Other Communication Skills	2.0	3.7	4.0	3.2	2.8
Engaging Teachers in Coaching Process	2.1	3.3	3.0	3.0	2.7
Observing Teachers & Providing Feedback	2.2	3.3	3.0	3.0	2.7
Explaining & Modeling High-Leverage Instructional Practices & Strategies	2.1	3.3	2.7	2.5	2.5
Expanding Repertoire of Instructional Strategies for Teaching Math or Science	2.4	3.0	4.0	1.9	2.3
Expanding Repertoire of Instructional Strategies for Teaching ELA	1.8	3.0	2.0	1.8	1.8
Expanding Repertoire of Instructional Strategies for Teaching ELL Students	1.5	1.7	2.7	1.4	1.6
4 = Very High Impact 3+ = High Impact 2+ = Moderate Impact 1+ = Low Impact					

In their narrative comments in the feedback forms and the final survey, coaches provided more specific descriptions of the impact of the program on their knowledge and understanding of instructional coaching:

- “It gave direction and structure to my role as coach and helped focus my attention.”
- “It helped me become more strategic in my work with teachers.”
- “The program expanded the repertoire of resources that I could use in my work with teachers.”
- “It helped me understand how to connect coaching goals to student learning. I was able to focus more on student outcomes and data use in my work with teachers.”
- “I became more confident in offering productive feedback and modeling practices for the teachers.”
- “My questioning with teachers was more thoughtful. I became much better in terms of getting teachers to engage in thinking. Overall, I am now asking more and telling less and not ‘doing’ for teachers like I did before the program.”

Team Meetings in Pilot Schools

The pilot schools in Everett and Revere reported regular and consistent use by all teacher teams of the data coaching protocols and practices presented by RBT. Staff in these schools also reported the most significant, positive changes in the nature, value, and outcomes of their team meetings. These results demonstrated the significant change potential of the data coaching program.

Meetings in both schools were characterized as being consistently *more structured and data-driven*. As one teacher concluded, “we were more focused on instruction rather than field-trip planning.” The inquiry cycle and protocols allowed teams to stay on task better and remain focused. Teachers valued the predictability provided by the structure of the meetings and use of protocols.

Meetings in both schools were considered to be *more productive and efficient*. Teachers considered the time devoted to these meeting as better spent than in previous years. There were also “more student-centered conversations focused on student work, rather than on we did.”

Teacher engagement during the team meetings in both schools increased this year due to the data coaching structure, process, and protocols. Climate of meetings and conversations among teachers were more collegial and collaborative. As a result, teachers were more willing to contribute substantively to the discussions, to *share their ideas, and be open to other ideas*. Individuals couldn’t dominate the discussion or choose to take a back seat during the discussion. Due to the protocols used, everyone was engaged even some of those who previously had been actively resistant.

Although teams in both schools discussed data in the past, they didn’t know how to *use it effectively for their action planning*. This has been a major change for both schools. This resulted in a much more directed use of data. These changes were particularly important because this helped teachers understand the need to use different approaches in re-teaching and provided guidance about which approaches to use. This action planning provided specific and concrete next steps to follow.

Although the other three pilot schools (in Chelsea, Malden, and Winthrop) reported more limited use of the RBT data coaching practices and protocols, there were still positive changes in their team meetings. In looking at data, all three reported a greater reliance on use of explicit evidence and multiple data sources rather than “what teachers felt.” There was a greater focus on looking at instruction and student work during these meetings. Efforts to use the inquiry cycle (or at least elements of that cycle) meant that there was more data analysis and data use of action planning at least among some of the teams in those schools.

Teaching & Learning

Interviews in the pilot schools provided some examples of classroom changes in teaching and learning related to the CSSI program and the data coach training. Some changes affected the formative assessments. Staff in the Malden, Revere, and Winthrop pilot schools all reported more frequent use of *formative assessments* due to the data coach program. Staff in the Everett and Revere pilot schools reported that the nature of the formative assessments because teachers

worked together on common assessments and shared ideas for effective assessments. As a result, the formative assessments allowed teachers to more accurately assess what students learned during their lessons and why they selected particular responses. Staff in the Everett pilot school also reported that they had greater success in adapting formative assessments to collect valuable information on ELL and special education students to better inform their curriculum decisions.

Staff in four of the pilot schools (Chelsea, Everett, Revere, and Winthrop) reported that work with the instructional coaches and/or improvement in the team meetings due to the data coach training improved and increased their *use of formative assessment results to drive a range of instructional decisions*. The data gave them “a better sense of when to reteach, who to reteach, and how to reteach.” They had a “much better understanding of what worked and didn’t work in their teaching” – encouraging them to change their practices in the future. It also contributed to improvement in differentiating instruction. Using data to better differentiate student needs allowed them to target classroom activities for students performing below, at, or above benchmarks.

Staff in the Everett pilot school reported that the project promoted more consistency in teaching in a grade level as teachers shared practices and assessed their effectiveness using common tools. Team meetings and use of common assessments also contributed to greater sharing between classroom and special education teachers around instructional strategies and practices.

Staff in the Revere and Winthrop pilot schools reported that the project had improved their *organization and use of student groups*. Instead of meeting with the same core group of students every week, teachers moved to having more flexible and responsive groups. They were able to provide quick feedback for some students rather than having to re-teach which made instruction more time-efficient.

Staff in all five pilot schools reported *making assessment criteria and data more visible to students*. As a result, students became much more aware of what they were working on, rubrics and criteria for success, and their own data results. This had the effect of helping students recognize their own growth and struggles, holding them accountable for their performance, and giving them more opportunities to celebrate their successes. There were also more interactions among students about instruction and assessment results. This reflected the use of the data analysis protocols presented through team meetings and the individual coaching by teachers in their classrooms.

Conclusions

Evaluation results demonstrate that both the CSSI program and the data coach training program were very well-received by their participants and provided a range of knowledge and tools that could be applied to drive changes in the schools. Conditions in the schools and districts meant implementation of these changes varied considerably across the different districts and schools. Despite these differences, staff in the five pilot schools reported positive changes in instructional and classroom practices as a result of this project.

Based on the evaluation results, the evaluator has developed several recommendations that could improve these programs. The first set of recommendations relate specifically to the content of the CSSI program:

- The pace of the CSSI sessions raised some concerns for participants. There may have been too many topics presented (or planned) for these sessions given the amount of time available for this program. As a result, participants did not have enough time to reflect on each topic. RBT should consider either reducing the topics covered in this program or adding one or two additional sessions to the program.
- CSSI sessions focusing on instructional coaching in ELA or reading or for ELL students were not well-connected to the sessions focusing on the coaching process. RBT should restructure the content of these sessions to provide greater continuity in the training experience across all sessions.
- New and experienced instructional coaches have different needs and bring different perspectives to the CSSI program. RBT should consider providing some differentiated experiences that are geared to each audience.

A second set of recommendations relate more broadly to the design of the project and suggest possible expansions or next steps:

- Most of the instructional coaches involved in this project were asked to provide instructional coaching in both one-on-one and team settings. RBT should consider providing more guidance to coaches on how to adapt the coaching process to each setting and how to leverage each setting to support each other.
- Most of the instructional coaches involved in this project were asked to fulfill other instructional responsibilities related to professional development, curriculum development and implementation, data use and analysis, and team facilitation or participation. While some experienced coaches were able to leverage these responsibilities in support of their instructional coaching work, other less experienced coaches struggled to do so. RBT should consider providing more practical guidance to coaches on strategies for effectively integrating these responsibilities to effectively support district and school change initiatives.
- Requirements of the coaches change on a seasonal basis throughout the school year and even from one school year to the next. These changes can relate specifically to the instructional coaching tasks or involve broader responsibilities placed on the coaches in support of district or school change initiatives. Often coaches are not in the position to determine their priorities on their own but must work with district and school leaders or colleagues to make these determinations. RBT should consider providing guidance to the coaches on how to effectively manage this prioritization process. It should also consider working with district and school leaders to communicate this issue to them and to provide them processes and strategies that can be used to systematically address these issues in collaboration with the instructional coaches.

- More broadly, district and school administrators play a key role in providing effective support to the instructional coaches to maximize their effectiveness. RBT should maintain and continue to expand its effort to ensure that administrators are informed of the appropriate expectations for instructional coaches, key challenges to ensuring their success, and proven strategies for providing them effective support.
- The network of instructional coaches developed through this project are a valuable resource to their districts and the Five District Partnership. Many demonstrated a thoughtful and reflective understanding of their role. RBT and the Five District Partnership should consider promoting greater cross-district communication among the instructional coaches to allow them to identify and discuss important problems of practice that are shared across schools and districts.