

NC ACCESS BEST PRACTICES



Office of Charter Schools
NC ACCESS PROGRAM
NC Department of Public Instruction

School Culture

Staff Support

Coaching for Excellence

Implementation Description

Leadership at The Expedition School (TES) in Hillsborough, NC has embraced the research that shows highly effective teachers have a substantial and long lasting impact on student achievement (Burgess, 2019), and coaching improves the quality of teacher instruction more than “most traditional PD and most other school-based interventions” (Kraft & Blazer, 2018). TES utilized NC ACCESS funds to expand its current coaching program and train a member of the staff to coach. During the 2021-22 school year, the new coach participated in the Instructional Leadership program offered through Henderson Collegiate, a model school for instructional leadership and coaching. This intensive program involved 12 days of training over a 9 month period which allows for trainees to implement what they learn by recording coaching sessions and eliciting feedback from program leaders and colleagues. The ongoing support allows each instructional leader to hone their skills to ensure that they become highly skilled at coaching others. Coaches at the school have been trained with the same coaching method which allows them to support each other and maintain consistency of implementation throughout the school.



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After establishing a well trained team of coaches, school

leadership assigns teachers to coaches. Since coaches focus on instructional strategies, rather than content, the coach’s teaching experience does not need to match the teacher’s grade level and subject area, which allows flexibility when pairing teachers to coaches. All staff members meet regularly with their assigned coach. Teachers new to the school and teachers in their first to third year, meet with their coach each week, while veteran teachers meet with their coach every

About This School

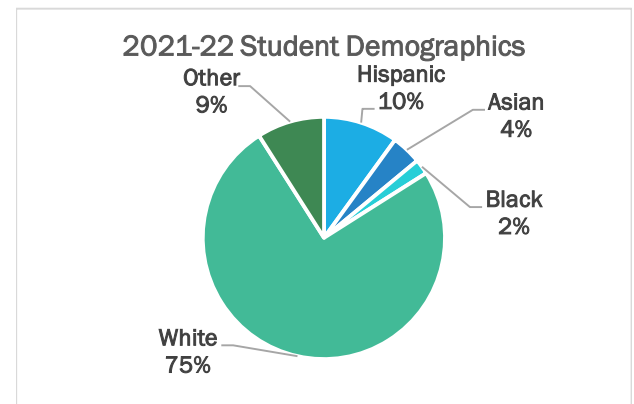
The Expedition School

The Expedition School embraces the natural curiosity of children and empowers them to become innovative problem solvers and community builders through a schoolwide Project Based Learning curriculum, with a focus on STEM integration.

Year School Opened: 2014-15

Grant Awarded: 2021-22

Initial Grade Levels Served: K-8



% ED Student Population: 13%

Urbanicity: Suburban / Hillsborough, NC

Persons in Poverty (Orange County)⁵: 10.3%

other week. The one-on-one coaching meetings follow [structured procedures](#) to ensure consistency among coaches. Each meeting begins by sharing something positive to celebrate successes and to establish rapport and trust within the coaching relationship. The major work of each session is focused on one of two components: feedback on classroom observations and evaluating student data. Frequent progress monitoring and follow-up are an essential part of the successful implementation of the coaching model, so that necessary instructional adjustments are made in a timely manner. The coaches focus on small bite size changes that are manageable for the teacher. They also provide teachers the opportunity to practice the strategy with the coach prior to implementation in the classroom. For example, early in the year, coaching sessions focused on strong classroom routines and procedures and developing effective lesson plans. As the year progressed, the focus shifted to tracking and improving student engagement. Coaches developed this focus, because multiple research studies have shown that high levels of engagement improve student learning and helps students persist through academic struggles (Findley, 2015).

Results

While the new coach participated in the Instructional Leadership program, she utilized the strategies she learned as she coached a first year teacher. This opportunity allowed both professionals to grow in their practice. The coach recorded her sessions with the teacher and got feedback from her trainers. Meanwhile, the teacher benefited from the coaching and modeling activities with the coach. This first year teacher showed tremendously growth in her practice in one year. The Reading EOG class mean scale score of the new staff member with a coach was 550.3, which very closely aligned with a same-grade veteran teacher's Reading EOG mean scale score of 552.

IReady scores show that all classrooms are performing at a similar level suggesting that the coaching support promotes consistency from classroom to classroom. Currently, 87% of students have met or exceeded growth. At the end of the year 73% of all students in the school demonstrated proficiency in reading on the i-ready assessment, with 82% of students demonstrating proficiency in the grade level with the coach, the new teacher and the veteran teacher. School-wide 83% of grade 3-8 students demonstrated proficiency in reading and math on the EOG test

Challenges

Time can be a big challenge, so it is important for the school to protect time in the master schedule to ensure that teachers and coaches are meeting on a regular basis.

Funding for 1 or more coaches is a large budget item, but it was found to be worth the investment in order to help each student have the best teacher possible.

Training all coaches in the same method creates the most consistency across the school and increases alignment of expectations and effectiveness of the coaching.

Future Modifications

Next year, the school will focus more heavily on improving its data collection protocols and shared walkthroughs to ensure consistency in coaching practices.

TES will leverage the expertise of outstanding teachers by videotaping great examples from their classrooms and sharing them with other staff.

Critical Components

Getting Started

Because feedback is an important part of the coaching process, establishing a school climate in which staff members trust one another and have a growth mindset is essential to success.

Communicating school norms and eliciting teacher buy-in are valuable pieces of the implementation process. Staff need to see coaching as a way to help them grow as teachers, rather than evaluative.

School leadership should be well trained in the coaching process, so they can make organizational decisions that best fit their school while maintaining fidelity to the coaching program.

Ongoing Supports

When hiring new staff, it is important to look for a growth mindset as a necessary qualification.

Staff members will participate in yearly training which emphasizes the importance of a growth mindset and the benefits of working with a coach. With time and consistency, the coaching process becomes part of the cultural norms and expectations of the school.

The coaches will continue to have a dedicated meeting time to share ideas, brainstorm solutions, and celebrate successes.

Equity Connections

It is easy to ascribe a student's academic struggles to their environment, and certainly poverty, systemic racism, and similar factors are real challenges educationally disadvantaged (ED) students face each day. However, the reality is that schools have limited control over these issues. Schools can identify factors over which they do have control and focus on making changes in those areas. Research repeatedly emphasizes that "teacher quality is the most important school variable" (Goldhaber, 2016). TES's emphasis on developing high quality teachers through instructional coaching promotes a greater return on investment than other initiatives and is likely to have an even greater impact on the ED student population (Goldhaber, 2016).

Research

1. Burgess, S. (December 2019). "*Understanding teacher effectiveness to raise pupil attainment*". IZA World of Labor 2019. Accessed May 27, 2022. Retrieved from <https://wol.iza.org/uploads/articles/515/pdfs/understanding-teacher-effectiveness-to-raise-pupil-attainment.pdf>
2. Findley, T. (August 25, 2014). "*Engage Kids With 7 Times the Effect*". Edutopia. Accessed May 27, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/engage-with-7x-the-effect-todd-finley#:~:text=Benefits%20of%20Engagement,Earn%20higher%20standardized%20test%20score>
3. Goldhaber, D. (2016). "*In Schools, Teacher Quality Matters Most: Today's research reinforces Coleman's findings*". *Education Next*, 16(2), 56-62.
4. Kraft, M.A., and Blazar, D. (2018). "*Taking Teacher Coaching to Scale: Can personalized training become standard practice?*" *Education Next*, 18(4), 68-74.
5. United States Census Bureau. "*Quick Facts North Carolina*". Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NC/PST045219>