



## HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

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## TO PUT IT SIMPLY, COACHING WORKS

The benefits of instructional coaching have been obvious to educators for decades, but research data now make those benefits measurably clear (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). The impact is particularly striking when you zoom in on districts and schools that have made a real investment in coaching.

For example, Norman (Oklahoma) Public Schools nearly doubled its investment in coaching over a two-year period and saw a marked reduction in the need to hire new teachers, from 225 in 2017 to 168 in 2019 (Norman Public Schools, 2019).

Reducing teacher attrition saves costs for districts, and it saves a different kind of cost for students, who tend to learn more from experienced teachers than novices (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Norman's story is just one of many we heard at a recent event Learning Forward sponsored on Capitol Hill and that we hear on a regular basis from Learning Forward members and clients. This issue of *The Learning Professional* is dedicated to sharing those stories and data about coaching strategies, impact, and methods for continuous improvement.

Our readers' interest and expertise in coaching were more evident than ever in the large number of article submissions we received for this issue. You shared with us a wealth of knowledge and insight that reinforced our belief in the excellent learning happening in schools and organizations, for educators as well as, and in the service of, students.

In this issue, we have included a mix of topics that apply not only to coaches themselves but to those who lead, support, and benefit from coaches. In these pages, you'll read about compelling evidence on the impact of coaching from summaries of national research (p. 33) and new empirical data (pp. 41 and 50). You'll hear from experts who encourage us to think about coaching with an equity lens (pp. 10 and 45), examining mental models in coaching (p. 24), and attending to student engagement (p. 28).

Other articles share practical suggestions, like technologies and techniques for making coaching accessible and feasible (pp. 58 and 66), interview questions to use when hiring coaches (p. 12), and a tool to guide coaches' demonstration lessons (p. 75).

Plus, check out this issue's online exclusives, which include articles on modeling versus co-teaching, peer visits across classrooms, and a statewide effort in Vermont to increase alignment between instructional coaching and school improvement plans.

Looking forward to 2020, we hope you'll join us in January for a webinar and a Twitter chat related to the coaching theme of this issue.

In the meantime, we hope this season brings you time to reflect, rest, rejuvenate — and read!

### REFERENCES

Kini, T. & Podolsky, A. (2016). *Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness? A review of the research*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Kraft, M.A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 547-588.

Norman Public Schools. (2019). *Norman's Title II professional learning investment cuts new teacher attrition*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. ■

