

ESSENTIALS

72% MORE PHONICS INSTRUCTION

The New York City Department of Education released the second-year evaluation of Universal Literacy, an initiative to boost K-2 reading proficiency by deploying trained reading coaches. (An article about the initiative's Digital Daily Coaching Log appeared in the December 2019 issue of *The Learning Professional*.)

In the 14 New York City districts that participated, 236 reading coaches worked with more than 3,000 teachers. Coaches spent about 45% of their time with teachers in classrooms and about 25% in planning, professional learning, and other forms of preparation. Teachers who participated reported that they changed their practices as a result of the coaching: About 72% said they incorporated more phonics and phonemic awareness to a moderate or great extent, and more than 60% said they incorporated more fluency instruction and vocabulary instruction.

High percentages of teachers, coaches, and administrators reported that the coaching developed teachers' knowledge of content, effective instruction, awareness of resources for instruction, and approaches to assessment to a moderate or great extent.

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19% ATTRITION AMONG TEACHERS OF COLOR

Although the majority of public school students are people of color, fewer than 20% of teachers are. Part of the gap stems from teachers of color leaving the profession in higher numbers than white teachers — about 19% compared to about 15%.

To understand the reasons and identify strategies to help reverse the trend, The Education Trust and Teach

Plus conducted focus groups with black and Latino teachers as well as case studies in schools and districts that are making intentional efforts to recruit and retain teachers of color.

Five key themes emerged about factors driving attrition: experiencing an antagonistic school culture, feeling undervalued, being deprived of agency and autonomy, navigating unfavorable working conditions, and bearing the high cost of being a teacher of color. The report includes recommended actions for schools and districts.

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35 STATES' TEACHER LEADERSHIP POLICIES

According to a new report from the National Council on Teacher Quality, 35 U.S. states now have formal teacher leadership policies. Such state policies can allow districts to allocate funds to these programs, which usually allow teachers to take on increasing responsibility and career status while also continuing to teach. However, only 21 of those states' policies give teacher leaders extra compensation or incentives. Some states allocate specific funds for these purposes, while others simply encourage them. In other states, funding decisions may be left to district discretion.

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64% OF SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS 'NOT WORTH USING'

Research has shown that most teachers download supplemental instructional materials from unregulated Internet sites. With the help of researchers Morgan Polikoff and Jennifer Dean, the Fordham Institute dove into some of the most popular resources on three sites (Teaches Pay Teachers,

ReadWriteThink, and Share My Lesson) to assess their level of quality.

Reviewers of over 300 materials rated most of them as low quality, including 64% that were rated as "should not be used" or "probably not worth using." Across all three sites, most materials were rated 0 or 1 on a quality scale from 0 to 3.

The report's authors concluded that teachers and school leaders need more information about the materials they are selecting. That information, they suggest, "could inform an array of subsequent strategies for improvement, from offering teachers training in how to identify high-quality materials to publishing a list of curated supplemental resources and addressing shortcomings and gaps in their core curriculum."

bit.ly/39JevBs

#1 in trusted leadership

School principals are the most trusted category of leaders in the U.S., according to a study by the Pew Research Center. A survey of more than 10,000 adults found that Americans have more positive perceptions of school leaders than of police officers, military leaders, religious leaders, journalists, leaders of technology companies, local elected officials, and members of Congress. They rated principals as more caring and fair than other leaders, most likely to handle resources responsibly and accept responsibility for mistakes, and least likely to act unethically. This should be welcome news to education leaders who sometimes feel embattled.

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