

# THE PASSKEY

HELPING TEACHERS HELP STUDENTS

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## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS OBSERVE PAHSCI'S POSITIVE IMPACT

Feedback from Advisory Board members visiting PAHSCI's participating schools has been both favorable and constructive. A total of five Advisory Board members have thus far visited Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Lancaster, and Bellwood-Antis districts, with three of the visits taking place in recent months. Comments shared have marked the observable high level of student engagement, transformations in culture, and attention to data informed instruction at PAHSCI schools.

Nancy Neusbaum, Assistant Executive Director of Capital Area IU, met with Principal Mike Reed, Coach Deborah Hines, and a student group from SciTech High in Harrisburg. The students shared the differences they see in their classrooms: teachers are more engaged and instruction is more creative. New learnings are much more meaningful to students as teachers help them make connections to their lives.

Improvement in student engagement and learning was evident during other Advisory Board visits as well. Ronnie Bloom, Esq., of The William Penn Foundation, visited Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia on May 7th. Simon Gratz and their team of coaches presented data reports indicating rising scores and benchmarks achieved, a variety of PLN strategy descriptions that are implemented in classrooms, and the history of the Initia-

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tive's implementation at the school. Ms. Bloom visited several classrooms to see PLN strategies in process and was most pleased as she observed PAHSCI at work and the teamwork of those involved. It is obvious that authentic teaching and learning are the standards in the Simon Gratz classrooms and that Simon Gratz's Principal Dolores Williams is both highly involved and keenly supportive of the Initiative.

Dr. Carla Claycomb, of the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), visited Harris High in Harrisburg. During her visit, Dr. Claycomb met with the high school's five coaches and visited four classrooms. She was impressed with the high level of motivation and student engagement observed during her visit.

Earlier this year, S. Dale High, of the High Companies, visited schools in the Lancaster District and Dr. Rita Bean, Director of the University of Pittsburgh's LEADERS Project and a member of PDE's Collaborative Coaching Board, visited the Bellwood-Antis School District.

Advisory Board members are invited to continue visiting PAHSCI's participating schools to observe the model's impact. Those who are interested may contact Ellen Eisenberg, PAHSCI's Executive Director, at 856.533.1608 for more information.

### DATES AND LOCATIONS:

### YEAR 3 EVENTS AND COURSES

Dates and locations for PAHSCI Year 3 events are available at [www.pacoaching.org](http://www.pacoaching.org). At present, schedule and registration information for Year 3 PLN courses are found at *Latest PAHSCI News*. Please send all registration information to Gina Calzaferri at Penn Literacy Network. Information for Year 3's Statewide and Regional Networking Sessions and Administrator's Retreat are found under *Calendar of Events* on PAHSCI's website. Please contact Tom Sebastian for more information at 856.533.1664.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**JUNE 25, 26, 27 Annual Centralized Course**

**SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1**

**Statewide Networking Session,  
Hershey Lodge and Convention Center**

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!  
We look forward to seeing you in September.**

## REFORMING SCHOOLS: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DATA AND TRUST

By Ophir Lehavy Busel, PAHSCI Communications Manager

"It takes teamwork, teamwork, teamwork," Carol Sienkiewicz, a Literacy Coach from Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia, said emphatically during a group activity on establishing school norms at the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative's annual Statewide Networking Sessions.

PAHSCI's annual Networking Sessions, held at State College from May 20 to May 21, brought together over 150 PAHSCI coaches, principals, central office administrators, mentors, and partners from around the state to collaborate on the subject of data. In the case of PAHSCI, a model that understands the challenge for a coach to enter, observe, and support another teacher's classroom, the discussion on data emphasized not only the importance of building relationships of trust in schools, but also provided hands-on activities for doing so.

Using group and teamwork strategies, Cathy Berlinger-Gustafson, a consultant on school and organizational change, facilitated an all-day session to assist participants in analyzing and evaluating student data to positively impact instruction. Data, such as student attendance, promotion and graduation rates, benchmark assessments, and standardized tests, has become a key component of the instructional coaching and mentoring Initiative as schools work towards improving student outcomes.

Ms. Berlinger-Gustafson opened the discussion on trust building with a quote from Tony Bryk and Barbara Schneider's *Trust in Schools*: "Social and relational trust is a key element in improving schools." The facilitator built upon this quote stating that trust among educators is not only important to working relations, but it is also an

**"Data is not a solitary conversation; it needs to be a collective dialogue. Looking at data invites teachers to think, work, share, and look at best practices together." - CATHY BERLINGER-GUSTAFSON**

## IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICES DAILY SUSTAINS PAHSCI'S GOALS

PAHSCI participants continue to ask, "How do we sustain this model beyond Year 3?" When approaching the topic of sustainability, it is important to focus on the goals and values that PAHSCI promotes: improving student achievement and building teacher capacity through ongoing, job-embedded professional development provided by instructional coaches and mentors.

Partner organizations have collectively identified organizational conditions and practices for schools to work with in order to keep sight of these goals on a daily basis. The practices are not new to PAHSCI participants who have been working continuously with them.

A commitment to whole school implementation; administrative commitment; structured accountability for

important indicator of a school's readiness for reform and accordingly, the sustainability of the reform's achievements. According to Bryk and Schneider, when relational trust is strong, school participants are more likely to be deeply engaged in the work of reform initiatives, and thus, the effects of the reform are more likely to diffuse broadly across the organization. Ms. Berlinger-Gustafson described that trust builds a format for conversations on crucial topics such as data, and how student outcomes can impact instruction. "Data is not a solitary conversation; it needs to be a collective dialogue. Looking at data invites teachers to think, work, share, and look at best practices together."

Relationship building based on trust has its challenges. School leadership can nurture trust building through the implementation of support systems. Ms. Berlinger-Gustafson suggested strategies for school leaders to improve trust in schools: first, build an organizational culture that supports teacher learning and collective decision making that includes systems for accountability; second, focus the work of the school on conversations that influence improvements in student engagement and learning.

As PAHSCI participants continue to revisit the topic of trust while discussing data, their roles as collaborative leaders has become more evident. Reforming schools for the goal of improving student outcomes can't be done in isolation; it requires teamwork.

For more information on Cathy Berlinger-Gustafson's presentation, visit *Role of a Coach* at [www.pacoaching.org](http://www.pacoaching.org).

implementation of instructional practices; and the provision of time for collaboration are required as conditions for support of PAHSCI's goals. Practices for improving student achievement include: participation in study groups; use of data to inform instruction; development of teacher leaders; walk throughs focusing on student engagement; leadership and instructional team meetings; professional learning focused on student and teacher needs; curriculum back mapping; implementation of PLN framework strategies; and systems for collecting, maintaining, and analyzing data.

By implementing these conditions and practices for improving student achievement on a daily basis, PAHSCI's goals and values can continue.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING TIME FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Michael Reed, Principal, SciTech High School-Harrisburg School District

The goal of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) is for all teachers in all schools to experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work. In order to reach this goal, we must move beyond the traditional model of disconnected ‘sage on the stage’ in-service days. Research confirms that effective, sustained professional development is focused on student achievement and occurs on-site within the context of the teacher’s classroom. Miller (1995, as cited in The Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2005, p. 1) states, “Recent research on professional development suggests that it is most effective when it includes components that are based in the school and embedded in the job and when it increases teachers’ theoretical understandings of their work.”

PAHSCI has created the ideal network for districts to achieve the goal set forth by NSDC, and SciTech High School, a magnet school within the Harrisburg School District, has taken full advantage of this initiative. Quality professional development, embedded classroom reinforcement, opportunities for collegial support, and outstanding implementation from our literacy coach and classroom teachers have led to a significant increase in student performance. After one

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## NEW LEARNINGS FOR COACHING PROVIDED AT KANSAS CONFERENCE

PAHSCI leaders are bringing new learnings to the Initiative from *Leading the Instructional Coaching Institute*, a conference held in Lawrence, Kansas in May. Jim Knight, a national leader and researcher in the field of instructional coaching, conducted the conference for those interested in leading instructional coaching and in developing instructional coaches.

Tom Sebastian, Foundations’ Director of High School Coaching, Gen Battisto, Math Mentor, and Dianne Arnold, Literacy Mentor, attended the conference on behalf of PAHSCI. Overall, learnings from the conference focused on clarifying and defining the process of instructional coaching. Some of the major learnings that will be brought back to the Initiative are the Partnership Philosophy and The Big Four.

Based on research, the Partnership Philosophy looks closely at tools for developing the relationships that coaches meet through their work. One of these relationship philosophies focuses on that of coach and teacher. The theory delineates seven pieces in building

year of quality implementation, SciTech High School showed a 23% increase on the number of students scoring proficient and advanced on 11th grade Reading PSSA’s and a 20% increase in Math PSSA scores.

Through creative scheduling which includes maximizing non-traditional learning opportunities, SciTech High School has created an infrastructure that allows teachers to receive comprehensive literacy professional development from our PAHSCI Literacy Coach for 90 minutes, every other week. These bi-weekly trainings are followed up by our Literacy Coach planning individually with teachers and modeling best practices in the classroom, ensuring implementation.

These personalized, daily development sessions are followed up with weekly non-evaluative learning walks. During these walks, teachers, administrators, and literacy coach visit random classrooms looking for implementation of researched based best practices. The experience allows teachers to reflect with one another and to browse, borrow, and build.

*Source:* The Annenberg Institute for School Reform. (2004) *Instructional coaching: Professional development strategies that improve instruction*. Retrieved January 4, 2006, from [www.annenberginstitute.org/images/](http://www.annenberginstitute.org/images/)

this relationship: equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity.

The Big Four, also research-based, provides coaches with four focus categories for working with teachers to enhance student achievement: Behavior, Content knowledge, Direct instruction, and Formative assessment.

Mentors will bring these learnings to PAHSCI schools to assist coaches further as they lead schools through their transformation.



**Dianne Arnold, Literacy Mentor, and Chris Hausmann, Literacy Coach from Keystone Central, participate at the Statewide Networking Session on May 21st.**

**LETTER FROM:  
PAHSCI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear Colleagues,

Ever wonder why school reform takes so long to root? Ask your colleagues. The answer will probably confirm what Stephen Barkley discovered and reported in the Fall 1999 *Journal of Staff Development*; that is, there is no time allotted for professional development in the course of the day. If there are no blocks of time devoted to professional learning, if there are no areas within the school day measured and marked off for deliberate and thoughtful planning around students' needs, and if there is no time set aside to collaborate about those needs, then teachers, administrators, and other staff developers will surely not be able to find the time. As Barkley clearly states in his article, "...they [staff] need instead to make time."

In order to transform schools, a great deal of creative thinking around scheduling needs to be uppermost in the minds of school and district administrators. The most important thing about this kind of thinking, however, is that the schools and districts believe in the importance of implementing a schedule that will allow all staff members, including administrators, to meet regularly, to work together, and to act as a team. A

collegial community is more than the friendly "Hello" or personable "Good-morning" we offer as we pass one another signing in, picking up mail, or running to the restroom. There must be a willingness to take risks and to effect the necessary coordination with all stakeholders in a district, including school board members and teachers' union officials to address the issue of making time.

Perhaps one place to start is to organize groups within a school to visit other schools that have alternative schedules. These visits could happen throughout the year, with reporting occurring at regular staff meetings. Of course, if your district does not have regular staff meetings or calendar days devoted to the professional development of staff, it is at this point where growth must begin. Recognizing the importance of thinking, planning, talking, and reflecting together establishes the environment necessary for reform to root and sends a clear message about teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

Ellen B. Eisenberg  
Executive Director, PAHSCI

## PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL COACHING INITIATIVE

Instructional coaching has emerged as a promising strategy for increasing student achievement and affecting education reform nationwide. In 2005, The Annenberg Foundation partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to implement the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI). Funded by The Annenberg Foundation, PAHSCI is a three-year, \$31 million instructional coaching initiative. Four additional partner organizations provide support for program implementation: Foundations, Inc., Penn Literacy Network from the University of Pennsylvania, Research for Action, and The Philadelphia Foundation. Research support is also provided by the Center for Data Driven Reform in Education from the Johns Hopkins University and by MPR Associates, Inc.

The PAHSCI model is designed to provide trained teacher-leaders, or coaches, to schools and school districts. The Initiative places one literacy and one math coach for every 600 students in 26 high-need high schools located in 16 school districts across Pennsylvania, with a total enrollment of over 32,000 students. Instructional coaches sustain ongoing, site-based, job-embedded professional development for teachers and administrators. They also facilitate in-class coaching and modeling, peer collaboration, and teacher training in order to improve learning at participating schools.

**We're on the web!**

[www.pacoaching.org](http://www.pacoaching.org)

### PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL COACHING INITIATIVE

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