

By [PIIC Regional Mentor Coordinator Kathy Gori and IU 7 PIIC Mentor Cindy Shaffer](#)

Effective educators are very familiar with advocacy. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that something as important as instructional coaching requires our unwavering support. The need for instructional coaching is well documented. Never before have teachers and administrators been faced with the depth and breadth of educational changes that are currently taking place in Pennsylvania and across the country. These mandates and reforms require educators to continuously change and improve in order to meet the needs of all students. In order to be successful, these sweeping changes require support for individual teachers, teams of teachers and teachers across entire school districts. Instructional coaches are key members of the change process and they are an integral part of professional learning. Coaches work with teachers through the PIIC model by focusing on the PIIC 4 Quadrants: one on one and small group coaching, collecting, analyzing, and using data, using evidence-based literacy practices, and supporting reflection and non-evaluative techniques.

So how does one advocate for the coaching role in schools and districts? First, it is imperative that principals and other school leaders understand the benefits of coaching and how coaching can support the school and district's goals. It is also important that the administrators understand the role of the coach, what coaching is and is not, and how critical the relationship between the principal and coach is to the success of instructional coaching. In order for these exchanges to occur, the coach needs to communicate frequently with the administration. The coach should schedule regular meetings with the principal and school leadership team. Without violating confidentiality, the coach should keep the principal and central office staff apprised of his/her schedule and the number of coaching activities that are occurring. The coach, principal and leadership team must be partners in planning embedded professional learning opportunities that meet the needs of the staff.

Similarly, the Board of School Directors must understand how instructional coaching impacts teachers and their students. In this difficult economic climate, school boards cannot fund every good idea that is brought before them. Instructional coaching must be viewed as the umbrella that helps teachers change their instruction to support the needs of their students as they implement a myriad of instructional mandates and reforms. Again, the coach needs to communicate by presenting information at board meetings, and sending monthly newsletter or one-page reports highlighting the impact of instructional coaching. This can be done by showcasing instructional strategies or by using teacher testimonials which share their experiences with instructional coaching. IU PIIC Mentors can help you develop your plan when approaching the board meetings. In short, school boards need data and other information to be productive partners. In order to insure success, coaches and other key personnel must build

transparent relationships with their principal, other school district leaders and the school board to advocate for instructional coaching.

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