

Frequent, Growth-Oriented Feedback at DC Public Schools

How DC Public Schools provides teachers frequent, real-time, growth-oriented feedback to connect professional learning to day-to-day instruction

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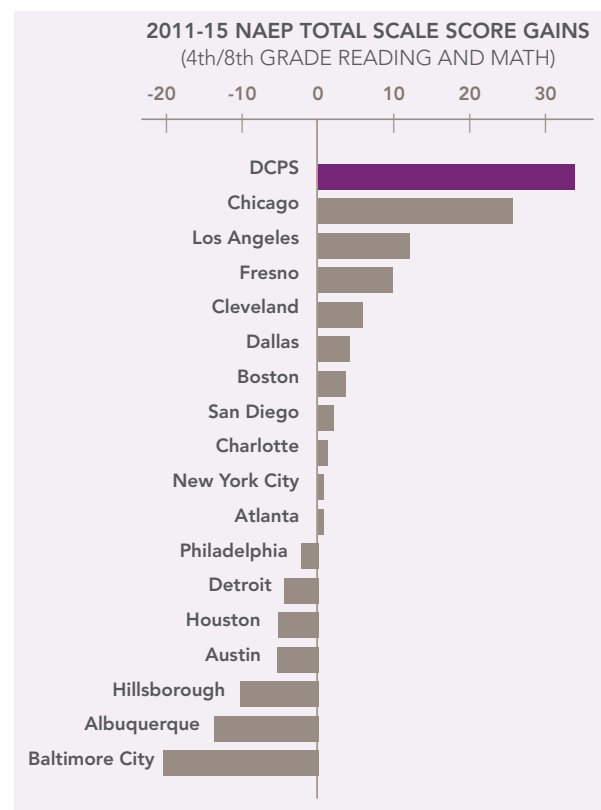
INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, the District of Columbia Public Schools launched its most ambitious professional learning effort to date. Learning Together to Advance our Practice (LEAP) is a district-wide professional learning strategy that integrates growth-oriented, content-specific coaching and collaborative professional learning for all core-content teachers. This effort scales research-based professional learning practices across all district schools and provides teachers with an unprecedented level of support.¹

LEAP is the latest phase in a decade-long journey of reform. DC Public Schools first captured national attention during Michelle Rhee's tenure as Schools Chancellor, when it began to use information on teaching effectiveness to identify, reward, and retain the highest-potential teachers while exiting those who persistently underperform.

Within a few years, DC Public Schools had become one of the fastest-improving public school districts in the country, achieving higher gains than any other large urban district in 4th and 8th grade reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) from 2011 to 2015.³ Despite these strong gains in overall student achievement, gaps persisted for low-income students and students of color.

FIGURE 1 DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS NAEP PROGRESS



Although DC Public Schools had developed a stronger talent base over the years, district leaders realized they needed to invest more in supporting teachers' development and building their expertise to succeed in the Common Core era.

Today, LEAP supports teachers across the district to improve their instruction and their content knowledge through frequent and actionable cycles of professional learning.

BEFORE LEAP: SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS, IMPROVING CURRICULUM

DC Public Schools used to offer professional development as many large urban districts do, grounded in district-wide workshops, school-based instructional coaches, and a daily 30-minute block for collaborative planning and school-based PD.* From 2011 to 2016 the district undertook a series of steps to create a foundation for a more strategic professional learning model and to build consistency across schools:

- DC Public Schools invested in strong **curricular supports** to ensure that teachers could build off high-quality instructional materials rather than spend time and energy creating them. In math and science, the district adopted materials from highly-vetted vendors, while in English Language Arts, leaders leveraged teacher expertise to create district-wide units of study aligned to the Common Core. Based on this work, in 2015 the district rolled out [Cornerstones](#): highly-engaging and rigorous units which help students make real-world connections. The district currently has 200 Cornerstone units spanning all grade levels and content areas.
- In 2011, the district hired additional **instructional superintendents**, reducing each supervisor's roster of schools from 30 to 10. In 2013 the district launched the Mary Jane Patterson Fellowship, named for the first African American principal in the district. The Fellowship is an 18-month program in which 10 to 12 assistant principals, instructional coaches and other leaders (recruited from within the district) are mentored by high-performing DCPS principals and participate in leadership trainings and workshops. Also in 2013, the district created a **new school-based Director of School Operations role** so that principals could delegate more non-instructional functions.
- Through **Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT)**, launched in 2012 with support from a federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant, DCPS created new career pathways to help retain its strongest educators. Teachers who advance up the LIFT levels become eligible for leadership opportunities and salary bonuses for teaching in high-poverty schools. The following year, DC Public Schools launched the **Teacher Leadership Innovation (TLI)** pilot and began testing different models for how to provide release time.

* Schools can use the contracted 30-minute block each morning for collaborative planning, individual planning, or professional development

THE SHIFT TO LEAP

Over time, these building blocks laid the groundwork for a more dramatic shift in the district’s professional learning strategy. LEAP is built around the LEAP team, which is comprised of four to six teachers in the same content area. LEAP teams are led by Assistant Principals, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders, called “LEAP leaders,” who provide their teachers frequent, personalized support to deepen their content knowledge and practice new skills.

The district has restructured time so that LEAP leaders and teams can learn together through weekly, 90-minute “LEAP Seminars,” during which the entire LEAP team develops content knowledge, analyzes student work, and applies the learning to upcoming lesson plans. These seminars are guided by an adult learning curriculum that is closely tied to the Common Core-aligned student curricula. It was developed by The Office of Instructional Practice (OIP) which was formed in 2015 to develop teachers and principals, in partnership with [Leading Educators](#), a national non-profit that specializes in supporting effective teacher leadership. Today, the Office of Instructional Practice is comprised of six distinct teams with roughly 50 full-time staff dedicated to the support and implementation of LEAP.

In addition, LEAP includes weekly observation and feedback for each teacher on the LEAP team, where LEAP Leaders observe teachers implementing practices from the seminar and provide content-focused feedback.

Summary of Key LEAP Terms

LEAP Team	Teams of six to eight teachers in elementary and middle schools and up to 15 teachers in high schools in the same core content area—Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies, and Early Childhood. Special Education and English as a Second Language teachers participate in teams with their general education colleagues.
LEAP Leader	Content experts who lead a LEAP team and facilitate the weekly seminar and observation cycles for their team members. Assistant Principals, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders are eligible to serve as LEAP Leaders
Teacher Leader	A teacher who has demonstrated content expertise and receives up to 50 percent release time from instructional duties to serve as a LEAP Leader
LEAP Seminar	A 90-minute weekly meeting during which the LEAP Leader helps team members deepen their content knowledge and hone their teaching practices aligned to Common Core standards
LEAP Observation	A 15-minute weekly observation where teachers can apply their learning from the weekly seminar
5P Debrief	30-45 minutes of one-on-one time following an observation during which the LEAP Leader and teacher share praise for what’s working, process the lesson to identify possible improvements, prioritize one skill to focus on during the coming week, plan an upcoming lesson with that skill in mind, and then practice that skill.
LEAP Module	A six- to eight-week unit of study designed around the key shifts in learning represented needed for college- and career-ready standards

WHAT DOES OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK LOOK LIKE IN LEAP?

LEAP coaching focuses on growth-oriented feedback. LEAP creates a learning environment where teachers are encouraged to ask questions, take risks and make mistakes without fear that these will impact their job security or salary. DC Public Schools deliberately established LEAP as a separate system from IMPACT, the formal evaluation system. Principals conduct IMPACT observations one to three times per year depending on a teacher's prior performance, and the data from those observations is kept confidential and separate from information LEAP Leaders record as part of their coaching. Although IMPACT serves a valuable role in measuring teaching effectiveness, it is distinct from the ongoing, growth-oriented coaching that helps teachers rapidly improve their instructional practice. About three-quarters of LEAP teams are led by instructional coaches or teacher leaders who are not responsible for evaluation, and in schools where APs serve as LEAP leaders, they are often not the evaluator for the teachers on their LEAP team.

The LEAP Coaching Cycle

Through LEAP, teachers participate in approximately 30 observation-coaching cycles over the course of the school year. Each includes a weekly 15-minute observation (bi-weekly at the high school level) and a 30-45 minute coaching conversation with the LEAP Leader. These cycles mean teachers get about five to ten times more coaching time per year than a typical teacher received previously. During observations, LEAP Leaders focus on a specific practice that teachers are working on in the seminars. For example, one week a LEAP seminar might focus on using mathematical models to deepen students' conceptual understanding. The LEAP Leader would help the team analyze an upcoming Eureka Math lesson plan and exemplar video clip. Later that week, the LEAP Leader would observe teachers to see how each of them presented a mathematical model in his or her own lesson, and how students responded.

Meaningful Feedback

Each debrief conversation follows a district-wide protocol that pushes the teacher to reflect on the lesson, rather than simply receive feedback on what to adjust. DC Public Schools calls it the "5P" protocol: Praise, Process, Prioritize, Plan, and Practice. The 5P protocol is based on Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's "Six Steps to Effective Feedback."⁴ First, the LEAP leader and teacher highlight strengths; then they analyze the lesson and student work to identify areas for improvement. They then prioritize an instructional practice to focus on the following week and plan specific opportunities for the teacher to implement that action in an upcoming lesson. Finally, the teacher practices the skill with the LEAP leader by creating ideal student responses and role-playing how to scaffold students to those responses.

FIGURE 2 5P PROTOCOL

Debrief Step	Sample Questions
Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you think the lesson went?• What lessons did you learn that we can build on, moving forward?
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What questions did you ask to get these student responses?• What scaffolds can we plan to ensure students can reach the ideal student response?
Prioritize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on what we just talked about, what do you think it would make sense to focus on?
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which lesson in the next week can we use to practice this skill?
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the ideal student response here?• What would you do if a student responds ... ?

“Because the teachers find the content relevant, it’s become “sticky” in that it’s something that they do even when I’m not there. And that was always the problem in the past: how do we get teachers to do this work once the observation is over? How do we *invest* teachers in the work? The answer is the focus on the content...that helps make it sticky beyond the LEAP seminar and observation.”

— Middle School LEAP Leader

WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO SUPPORT OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK?

To implement the above practices at scale, district leaders deliberately reorganized how people, time, and money are used centrally and at the school level in four ways:

- 1. Distributed Leadership:** Distribute instructional leadership to content-specific roles with manageable caseloads
- 2. Time:** Provide sufficient time within the school day for growth-oriented observation and coaching cycles
- 3. Support:** Support instructional experts to deepen their knowledge of the adult learning curriculum and coaching practices
- 4. Continuous Improvement:** Dedicate district-level resources to implementing and continuously improving the model

Each of the key decisions resulted from careful analysis of district resource use and the tradeoffs required for teachers to access the ongoing, growth-oriented feedback integral to LEAP.

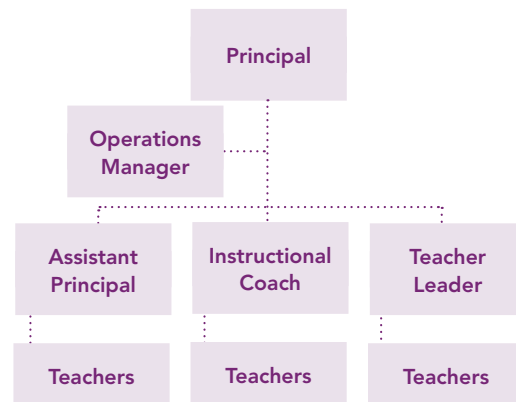
1. Distributed Leadership: Distribute instructional leadership to content-specific roles with manageable caseloads

Choosing Leaders

To implement weekly cycles of observation and coaching, DC Public Schools leaders recognized that a principal and an instructional coach or assistant principal are not set up well to support all teachers in a school. First, the rigor of Common Core requires educators to be deeply familiar with the specific standards, curricula, and assessments for their grade and content area, making it challenging for an individual leader to hold that expertise for the entire school. Second, there is simply not enough time in the week for one or two instructional leaders to observe and debrief with every teacher in the building and fulfill all their other responsibilities.

LEAP addresses these challenges through distributed leadership, where a mix of assistant principals, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders serve as the LEAP Leaders. To demonstrate their content-specific expertise, LEAP Leader candidates take a district-provided assessment of both content and pedagogical knowledge. Principals use this information to identify LEAP leaders based on their school’s particular needs and create their plan for LEAP team assignments. Instructional superintendents and OIP hold final approval over LEAP plans to ensure a consistent standard across the district.

FIGURE 2 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



In this model, principals serve as a “leader of leaders” focused primarily on driving instructional improvement. Often, they can delegate a great number of non-instructional functions to the Director of School Operations role.

LEAP Leaders have differentiated workloads based on their other responsibilities. Instructional coaches support 8-10 teachers and spend 100 percent of their time on teacher development. Assistant principals and teacher leaders support a fraction of that load because they have other operational or instructional responsibilities. This structure makes a frequent feedback system much more feasible, compared to the traditional model where 1-2 coaches support the entire school.

FIGURE 3 SUMMARY OF SUPPORT LOAD RANGE BY LEAP LEADER ROLES AND COACHING CASE LOAD

LEAP Leader Role	% Time Dedicated to Teacher Support	# of Teachers Each Leader Observes and Coaches
Instructional Coach	100%	8-10
Assistant Principal	75%	5-7
Teacher Leader with 50% Release Time*	50%	3-4

* Teacher Leaders teach students for at least 50% of the day and are released from 25% to 50% of their teacher duties to allow sufficient time for adult leadership work.

For three years prior to LEAP, DC Public Schools tested distributed leadership models through the Teacher Leadership Innovation (TLI) pilot. Under TLI, highly effective teachers received a \$2,500 stipend and up to 50 percent release time to facilitate collaborative planning and provide coaching and feedback for other teachers in the building. These responsibilities became integral to the LEAP Leader role. With funding from a federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant, DCPS could innovate and test leadership roles before scaling across the district. For example, district leaders learned how much release time is required for teacher leaders to coach effectively.

Resource Flexibility

Principals can provide instructional leadership in a cost-neutral way because they have resource flexibility and discretion over the number and type of staff positions in their building. In the budgeting cycle leading up to LEAP’s roll-out, school leaders used this flexibility to identify a sufficient number of LEAP Leaders. For example, a principal could decide to trade out an assistant principal role to fund two teacher leader roles and thus expand content-area expertise in the building. Creating the two teacher leader roles also gives excellent teachers an opportunity to advance their career without taking them fully out of the classroom. However, there are tradeoffs for principals to consider in shifting more authority to teacher leaders. Reducing an assistant principal role may put a larger administrative burden on the principal and other school leaders, who are still responsible for the formal IMPACT evaluations for all staff. The principal may also need to spend time messaging and managing a cultural shift during the initial part of the transition, as some teachers may be unfamiliar with receiving coaching from a peer.

2. Time: Provide sufficient time within the school day for growth-oriented observation and coaching cycles.

Staffing and Scheduling

LEAP Leaders have time built into their schedules to observe teachers, prepare their feedback, and debrief with each teacher. The observation lasts approximately 15 minutes per week for each teacher, followed by 30-45 minute debrief conversation.

School leaders must take a very deliberate approach to staffing and scheduling to ensure enough time for this model. It is easier for principals to protect time for instructional coaches or assistant principals to observe and debrief with teachers, facilitate weekly seminars, and prepare for coaching cycles and seminars, given that 75-100 percent of those roles are dedicated to LEAP support. Through the TLI pilot, DC Public Schools identified four models for the teacher leader role that successfully protect the 50 percent release time:

- **Interventionist:** Teacher leaders work as interventionist teachers for a specific content area, with a reduced teaching load.
- **Shared Classrooms:** Two teacher leaders share a classroom of students, each teaching for 50 percent of the day. When one teacher is teaching, the other teaching serving a LEAP leader, and vice versa.
- **Reduced Course Load:** Teacher leaders secure release time by teaching a reduced load of classes: for instance, teaching four periods of 9th grade English instead of six.
- **Shared Coverage:** One shared coverage teacher provides the release time for two teachers. While teacher leader A is teaching, teacher leader B has release time. The coverage teacher provides coverage for teacher B. When teacher leader B is teaching, teacher leader A's release time is provided by the same shared coverage teacher.⁵

The district provides explicit guidance to principals through the TLI Release Time Guide to support them in building the master schedule and structuring release time for LEAP Leaders.

DC Public Schools structured time for core-content teachers to participate in debrief conversations and the weekly LEAP seminars as part of the existing 225 minutes of planning time laid out in the collective bargaining agreement. Teachers spend 90 minutes of that time in LEAP seminars—during which they periodically review videos of each other's teaching, reinforcing a cycle of continuous learning—along with 30-45 minutes debriefing with their LEAP Leader, and 90 minutes each week for independent or collaborative planning.

FIGURE 4 ADAPTED FROM "A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LEAP LEADER"

HOW A LEAP SCHEDULE WORKS

Mr. Williams is a Teacher Leader and 6th grade ELA teacher at a DCPS middle school. He is a LEAP Leader for the 6-8 ELA team, which consists of three teachers. Mr. Williams has a lighter teaching load on Tuesdays to make time for the weekly LEAP Seminar and observations. At right is a sample of Mr. Williams' Tuesday schedule.

Time	Responsibilities
8:00-8:30	5P Debrief with Teacher 1
8:30-10:30	Teach 6th Grade ELA
10:30-12:00	Lead 6-8 ELA LEAP Meeting
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:00	LEAP Observation, Teacher 2
1:00-1:15	LEAP Observation, Teacher 3
1:15-2:15	Prep for LEAP Seminar next week
2:15-2:45	5P Debrief, Teacher 2 (Ms. Garcia)
2:45-3:30	Daily Planning Time

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MS. GARCIA, 7th GRADE ELA TEACHER

Ms. Garcia teaches 7th grade ELA and is part of Mr. Williams' 6-8 ELA LEAP team. At right is a sample of Ms. Garcia's Tuesday schedule. Because she has the LEAP meeting, she too has a lighter teaching load than on most other days.

Time	Responsibilities
8:00-8:30	Morning Collaboration
8:30-10:30	Teach 7th Grade ELA
10:30-12:00	6-8 ELA LEAP Meeting
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-2:15	Teach 7th Grade ELA LEAP Observation (12:45-1:00)
2:15-2:45	5P Debrief
2:45-3:30	Individual Planning Time

3. Support: Support instructional experts to deepen their knowledge of the adult learning curriculum and coaching practices.

LEAP extends high quality professional learning opportunities to both teachers *and* LEAP Leaders. To be effective coaches, LEAP Leaders need to continuously strengthen their understanding of the Common Core-aligned instructional shifts and effectively leverage available curricula. LEAP leaders may also need to hone their skills in facilitating adult learning, such as fostering meaningful collaboration and self-reflection during feedback. In collaboration with Leading Educators, DC Public Schools created an adult learning curriculum and three types of professional learning opportunities for LEAP Leaders throughout the school year.

Adult Learning Curriculum

Just as the district invested in rigorous CCRS-aligned curricula to support teachers in lesson planning, DC Public Schools designed LEAP around an adult learning curriculum specific to each core content area and grade level. The LEAP modules equip LEAP Leaders with weekly objectives, facilitation notes, exemplar lesson plans, videos and articles. LEAP Leaders spend their preparation time understanding and adapting the LEAP seminar modules, rather than developing content from scratch.

Summer Intensive

LEAP Leaders participated in a two-week training in summer 2016 to deepen their understanding of CCRS-aligned instructional practices within their subject area and learn to facilitate the LEAP modules. LEAP Leaders also learned to facilitate adult learning with the support of a detailed rubric that outlines behaviors such as building rapport, checking for understanding, and ensuring that participants own the majority of cognitive work.

Weekday Workshops

During the school year, LEAP Leaders attend four “Weekday Workshops,” which are PL days that build on the work from the Summer Intensive and are differentiated by content area and grade level. The Leadership Development team in OIP partners with Leading Educators to develop and facilitate these workshops. The first half of the workshop focuses on content for the upcoming LEAP module. LEAP Leaders discuss the research underpinning the instructional practices in the module, norm on criteria for success in lesson plans and student work, and discuss how to differentiate content for teachers. The second half focuses on learning and practicing adult leadership such as facilitating an effective debrief conversation or effectively responding to pushback. LEAP Leaders reflect on how they are progressing on the facilitation rubric, set goals to improve their facilitation, and role-play with each other to practice strategies to build teacher comfort with self-reflection and feedback.

Ongoing Support

In between each Weekday Workshop, DCPS provides additional support to LEAP Leaders to ensure they have the resources to meet their teachers’ needs. Content-specific professional learning teams in the Office of Instructional Practice send out weekly newsletters with suggestions for scaffolding the seminar for teachers and highlighting potential challenges. The professional learning teams also host periodic content nights, optional sessions for LEAP Leaders to dive deeper into the instructional focus for the module. During the 2016–2017 school year, Leading Educators also provide personalized coaching to LEAP Leaders at 31 Title 1 schools.

4. Continuous Improvement: Dedicate district-level support to implementing and continuously improving.

Strategically Shifting Resources

DC Public Schools deliberately restructured central office departments and initiatives to ensure that resource use reflects top district priorities. For example, IMPACT initially invested in a cadre of content experts known as Master Educators to carry out the formal observations integral to the evaluation system.* As principals became more skilled in observing and evaluating teacher performance, the district shifted full responsibility for evaluation to the school level and eliminated the Master Educator role. Many former Master Educators applied to new positions created through LEAP, such as school-based content leads and OIP staff responsible for developing LEAP content.

In addition, district leaders analyze multiple types of data to measure which initiatives are producing results and shift resources away from ineffective programs. During the 2012-2013 school year, the district funded five different teacher leadership programs. Based on district staff evaluation of program effectiveness, by the 2015-2016 school year, DC Public Schools had zeroed in on one approach to teacher leadership: the TLI initiative in partnership with Leading Educators. Having freed up funds from the eliminated programs, the district scaled TLI from 20 teacher leaders across seven schools to 175 teacher leaders across two-thirds of schools in just three years.

This rigorous approach to continuous improvement is not limited to teacher leadership or LEAP but extends to many decisions about how district resources are used. For example, in 2012 the district eliminated a teacher mentoring program that did not result in desired changes to teacher practice, satisfaction, or retention, freeing up resources to reinvest in other initiatives.

The district's ability to quickly and deliberately shift its people, time and money to its top priorities is a hallmark of strategic resource use. These decisions rely on both access to and understanding of data that sheds light on the effectiveness of different programs, as well as a strong cultural orientation towards continuous improvement.

Iterating and Improving

The continuous improvement mindset is also fully evident in the district's approach to LEAP. As schools rolled out the first LEAP module in September 2016, OIP teams immediately started iterating and improving the seminar content. The LEAP Design team observed seminars and surveyed teachers, LEAP Leaders, and principals across the district. Content-specific professional learning teams used that information to make fairly significant changes to the second module, introduced just six weeks later. These changes included creating a new math module focused on scaffolding the Eureka Math curriculum for struggling students and re-structuring LEAP seminar time to include more collaboration between teachers.

* The Master Educator role was funded through Race to the Top and Teacher Incentive Fund grants

Regularly surveying stakeholders is just one way in which DC Public Schools is committed to continuous improvement. OIP collects information to improve LEAP in multiple ways, from different stakeholder perspectives:

- **Alignment of content across schools:** The LEAP Design team regularly observes seminars across the district. They note how LEAP Leaders modify module content and either share those improvements with other schools or identify areas where LEAP Leaders need more support.
- **Fidelity of implementation:** DC Public Schools uses the online platform Whetstone to track data on LEAP implementation. LEAP Leaders log into the platform to record notes from their weekly seminars, observations, and debrief conversations.
- **Impact on teacher practice and student achievement:** DC Public Schools has partnered with Stanford University and the University of Virginia to measure the impact of LEAP on teacher effectiveness and student outcomes to inform any broad-scale changes to LEAP.
- **Testing new initiatives:** The LEAP Innovation Team is currently piloting an initiative to test whether video observation increases the effectiveness of instructional feedback.

FIGURE 5 OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE FUNCTIONAL TEAMS

Office of Instructional Practice LEAP Support Teams

- **Design:** Ensures quality and consistency of implementation across schools through observations and surveys
- **Leadership Development:** Collaborates with Leading Educators to plan content for the Weekday Workshops
- **Implementation:** Manages the technical aspects of LEAP, including the online platform and site logistics for Weekday Workshops
- **Innovation:** Conducts research and pilots initiatives to improve and evolve LEAP
- **Professional Learning:** Develops LEAP modules and provides ongoing support to LEAP Leaders. Comprises three sub-divisions for:
 - Math
 - Liberal Arts (ELA, Social Studies, and Science)
 - Specialized Instruction (Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Specials)
- **Strategy:** Analyzes data on implementation

REPURPOSING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK

Although the district's total investment in LEAP is significant, much of it was made possible through strategically repurposing existing time and funds. The table on the next page outlines the key startup and ongoing costs associated with observation and feedback cycles through LEAP. The primary startup costs to get LEAP up and running included contracting with Leading Educators to develop the adult learning curriculum and train LEAP Leaders. The district sought out short-term, philanthropic funding for these startup costs with the understanding that they would decrease over time as the district continues to increase internal capacity to support implementation.

The ongoing annual expense of LEAP was designed to be **cost-neutral** at both school and district levels. As the district's priorities have shifted over time, system leaders deliberately sought out ways to redirect resources to urgent needs and priorities. At the school level, principals are expected to create LEAP Leader roles and associated release time, as well as teacher leader stipends, within their existing budgets and make resource tradeoffs. Time for teachers to debrief observations with their LEAP Leader is allocated as part of the existing weekly planning minutes within the collective bargaining agreement.

At the district level, the creation of dedicated LEAP support teams and systems for continuous improvement was cost-neutral due to the reorganization of the central office. Roles at central office were repurposed to support schools in implementing LEAP effectively. Going forward, DC Public Schools anticipates holding five to seven days of Summer Intensive and three to four Weekday Workshops to continue developing the content expertise of LEAP Leaders, as well as continued work to improve LEAP content modules. The vast majority of this work is carried out in the district Office of Instructional Practice in conjunction with Leading Educators.

“LEAP is an invaluable model. We meet weekly, analyze student work, look at district assessments, and make plans for instruction that actually make sense in the realm of our school and our personal teaching styles.”

—Teacher at Murch Elementary School, DC Public Schools²

FIGURE 6 STARTUP AND ONGOING INVESTMENTS IN LEAP OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK CYCLES

Investment	Cost (in \$)	Cost (as % of Budget)
STARTUP INVESTMENT: Supported with philanthropic grants		
Support: Support for instructional experts to deepen their knowledge of the adult learning curriculum and coaching practices		
Develop adult learning curriculum	\$1.1 M	0.1%
Cost of running Summer Training and Weekday Workshops	\$0.6 M	0.1%
TOTAL STARTUP COSTS	\$1.7 M	0.2%
ONGOING ANNUAL INVESTMENT: Cost-neutral		
Distributed Leadership: Distribute instructional leadership to content-specific roles with manageable caseloads		
LEAP Leader time for seminars, observations and debriefs	\$30 M	4.4%
Teacher Leader stipends	\$0.6 M	0.1%
Time: Provide sufficient time for growth-oriented observation and coaching cycles.		
Teacher time for debrief — occurs during existing planning time	\$0 M	0.0%
Support: Support instructional experts to deepen their knowledge of the adult learning curriculum and coaching practices		
Estimated investment in LEAP Leader time for future summer and weekday workshops/year	\$2.4 M	0.3%
Continuous Improvement: Dedicate district-level support to implementing and continuously improving the model		
Central office staff	\$4.3 M	0.6%
Annual cost of online platform	\$0.6 M	0.1%
TOTAL ANNUAL INVESTMENT	\$37.9 M	5.5%
TOTAL COST OF OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK CYCLES	\$39.6 M	5.7%

THE IMPACT OF LEAP

Through LEAP, DC Public Schools has made a big shift away from the typical “sit and get” model of professional learning, where teachers attend periodic, large-group workshops and are then on their own to transfer that new knowledge to their teaching. The LEAP seminar provides an ongoing opportunity for teachers to deeply study and implement a CCRS-aligned lesson with an instructional expert who knows their students. But what makes LEAP such an innovative professional learning strategy is that teacher learning does not happen in isolation from practice. Through the weekly observation and debrief, teachers have support in applying their learning to their actual work with students and refining their practice.

Early evidence suggests that that shift is paying off. In a survey conducted four months into implementation, 94 percent of principals and LEAP Leaders agreed that LEAP is an improvement over the previous model of professional learning in the district. 87 percent of LEAP Leaders and principals agreed that LEAP has led to improvements to their teachers’ content knowledge and instructional practice. The weekly seminar and observation cycles are also shifting adult culture within schools: 90 percent of LEAP Leaders agreed that LEAP is leading to improvements to their teachers’ openness to feedback and collaboration. This openness to feedback is core to the development of authentic growth mindsets and continuously improving instruction.⁶

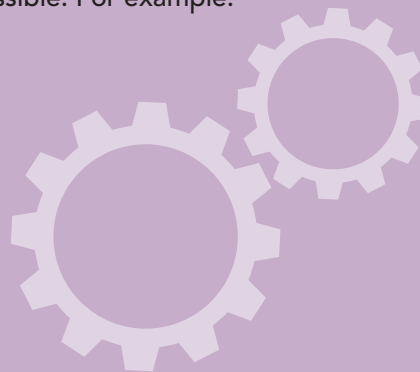
TAKE ACTION

DC Public Schools has generously shared examples of schedules, design guides, adult learning curricula and more that make LEAP possible. For example:

- LEAP Handbook
- LEAP Observation and Debrief Tool
- LEAP Team Design Guide
- LEAP Scheduling Policies and Best Practices
- TLI Release Time Guide
- A Day in the life of a LEAP Leader
- Sample LEAP Modules for ELA and Math

You can find these in the Professional Learning Toolkit at:

www.erstrategies.org/library/connected_professional_learning



ENDNOTES

1. LEAP Handbook 2016-2017, p7
2. Office of Instructional Practice survey of DC Public Schools teachers, presented February 2017. Provided to ERS by DC Public Schools.
3. Press release, DC Public Schools, Oct. 28, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://dcps.dc.gov/release/dc-public-schools-continues-momentum-fastest-improving-urban-school-district-country>
4. Bambrick-Santoyo, P. (2012). *Leverage Leadership: A Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Basic information here: <http://www.uncommonschools.org/our-approach/thought-leadership/leverage-leadership-book-paul-bambrick-santoyo-doug-lemov>
5. DC Public Schools TLI Release Time Guide. Retrieved from: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzkCFF-mShPfnENYYThkd2FscVk/view>
6. Data on student achievement results under LEAP is not available at the time of this brief's publication, but DC Public Schools is collaborating with the University of Virginia to determine what impact LEAP has on instruction and student growth.

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