

Title: A Case Study of a High School in the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative that Increased Student Achievement

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The failure of the United States of America to acknowledge and act on the cumulative nature of learning has caused us to fall behind other nations (Hirsch, 1996). These concerns have led to governmental intervention to improve our nation's school systems. The Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI) was created by the Commonwealth with support from the Annenberg Foundation, Foundations, Inc., Penn Literacy Network, Philadelphia Foundations, and Research for Action, to improve student achievement on the high school level.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine one high school's involvement in the PAHSCI. This study sought to understand the factors that contributed to or challenged the conditions for the PAHSCI to be a positive and sustainable high school reform initiative and to determine the relationship between instructional coaching, teacher change, and student achievement. The high school selected for this study was the one high school in the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI) that most improved the grade eleven student PSSA scores in mathematics and reading from the years 2005 to 2007. The beliefs and comments of the administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers provided in-depth knowledge to determine "why" this high school was successful, "how" the PAHSCI may have influenced the participants at the high school, and "what" occurred to increase the PSSA scores.

This research study concluded that the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative, utilizing a model of change, was successful in influencing the change of teachers' instructional practices. The results at this one high school indicated that the use of instructional coaching as on-site professional development specialists should continue to be examined and refined. There was significant evidence that the goal of increasing literacy throughout the environment was successful. This study concluded the research gap still exists when attempting to identify the impact or influence of instructional coaches on improving student achievement.