

Jounce Partners and the Wilmington Learning Collaborative

Improving Student Outcomes through Coaching of Teacher Leaders

The Jounce-WLC Partnership

Jounce Partners is a non-profit organization that equips school leaders with the expertise to skillfully invest in teacher practice. Jounce forms partnerships with schools and districts to deliver support for instructional leaders or direct training for teachers. *Jounce* is a physics term that means the acceleration of acceleration: at Jounce, we help schools accelerate teacher learning to accelerate student learning.

This year, Jounce partnered with the WLC to add an instructional development component to the Teacher Leadership Design Fellowship. The Jounce team led a series of Community of Practice trainings during the year in which Teacher Leaders opted for a math pedagogy track, literacy pedagogy track, or student engagement and culture track. In addition, each Teacher Leader worked closely with a Jounce coach who delivered real-time coaching and facilitated practice-based learning and intellectual preparation on-site every week.

Why Instructional Coaching and Content-Specific Professional Development for Teacher Leaders?

The WLC team and Jounce Partners wanted to ensure that expert instruction was part of the definition of teacher leadership, and that ultimately supporting Teacher Leaders would mean stronger student outcomes. **12 of the 35** teacher leaders have a formal role in coaching other educators, leading PLCs, or mentoring colleagues. The other 23 teacher leaders serve as informal mentors and can make their classrooms into bright spots for others to learn from. Rather than assume a teacher leader's instructional development was complete, we partnered to continue growing their effectiveness as instructors as they also worked to impact the broader school environment. **The theory of change is simple:** if Teacher Leaders in the WLC schools become more effective educators, they will improve student outcomes in the classrooms where they teach *and* they are well-positioned to share their newly learned best practices through formal and informal coaching and mentorship.

Partnership Impact - Program Data

Increased Instructional Efficacy

Teacher leaders were surveyed about Jounce trainings:

- 89% of teacher leaders agreed or strongly agreed (68%) that they are more effective teacher leaders as a result of the content-specific Jounce training.
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed (79%) that the content of the Jounce training was directly applicable to their specific role.
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed (82%) that the Jounce training provided them with clear actionable takeaways for their classrooms.

Teacher leaders also reflected on the overall experience of coaching and trainings:

- 71% were more confident in their ability to improve student outcomes in their own classroom or within their role as a leader.

- 63% were also more confident that they would be able to improve student outcomes *beyond* their own classroom.
- 69% agreed that the instructional coaching was valuable or extremely valuable to their professional development.

Feedback from Teacher Leaders

- “I enjoyed the training on Scarborough’s Reading Rope - I love the concept and will be using it!”
- “This session gave me more practical knowledge, big thoughts, and reflections to build on than everything I did last year. THANK YOU!!!”
- “I am excited to share my learning in my school and begin the conversation about a new way to look at reading instruction.”
- “I learned that background knowledge is a huge gamechanger for improved reading comprehension outcomes.”
- “This was the perfect content for a K-5 math teacher. It was very meaningful to see how these key ideas build on each other for our students to understand math conceptually.”
- “I learned the importance of unit properties across grade levels for math instruction. So excited to implement this in kindergarten and start this foundation early.”

Partnership Impact - School and Classroom Highlights

Instructional coaching by Jounce coaches was customized to the role and need of individual Teacher Leaders, but was always designed to ultimately increase student engagement and/or learning outcomes. Some examples of this work include:

- At Pritchett, two Teacher Leaders have coached other educators in their building. A teacher coached by a Teacher Leader has turned classroom culture around, dramatically increasing time-on-task and decreasing behavioral referrals. Another teacher has significantly improved phonics instruction and students’ conceptual math understanding through coaching from another Teacher Leader.
- At Bayard, where a Teacher Leader and her coach have focused on math instruction, student scores on in-class assessments have increased by 20 percentage points, on average. First, the Teacher Leader developed practices to increase student time on-task, and then she began to support students in recognizing the “big ideas” of math within the curriculum, leading to increased student confidence and understanding.
- At both Harlan and Bayard, Teacher Leaders reported that the teachers they coach are more responsive to feedback and more engaged during PLCs and coaching meetings, and teachers at each school have requested that the Teacher Leaders provide more feedback, including 1-on-1 planning meetings and lesson practice.
- At Kuumba Academy, student proficiency in 4th grade math increased from 22% to 45% within a module when a Teacher Leader and her coach focused on conceptual math instruction during the winter. The number of students scoring “highly proficient” per curriculum-based assessments increased 4-fold during that time. The teacher’s principal said, “She strives to do an amazing job each and every day with her students and is such a reflective practitioner, always looking for more ways to support her students’ growth and achievement.”

- At EastSide Charter School, a Teacher Leader focused on math instruction with her coach throughout the year. Math unit assessment averages increased from 55% to 73% and more than half of students (52.5%) met their end of year MAP assessment target by the mid-point of the year.
- At Johnson, a Teacher Leader focused on phonics instruction in their coaching. Students strengthened their phonological awareness and their letter, word part, and sight word recognition, leading to improved outcomes on their Phonics Screener for Intervention.
- At Pulaski, a Teacher Leader increased measures of student engagement in the library by more than 60% over the course of her work with her Jounce coach, and then was able to focus on building students' background knowledge to support their growth as readers.

Student Growth through Instructional Leadership

At Jounce we target at least 10 point annual increases in math proficiency and 8 point annual increases in ELA achievement in our standard school partnerships, where we coach instructional leaders or teachers. Using state standardized test data where available and nationally normed assessment data in untested grades, we evaluated math performance in the schools and grade bands where we coached leaders weekly in 2023-24. Math proficiency increased across all of these partner schools between 2023 and 2024, with more than half of schools gaining over 10 points in proficiency. We also evaluated ELA performance across schools where we coached leaders weekly. More than half of these partner schools showed increases of 8 percentage points or more from 2023 to 2024, and a quarter of our partner schools more than doubled the number of students reading on grade level. In our largest teacher coaching partnership, teachers coached directly by Jounce led an average of 65% of students to make over a year of academic growth in math and ELA, compared to 52% in classrooms without Jounce coaching. In this partnership, we found the WLC Teacher Leaders to be engaged professional learners, committed to improving outcomes for their students; we hope to apply lessons learned from this year's partnership to support them in driving these kinds of gains for WLC students in the years to come.

