



— 2018 —
ANNUAL REPORT

A photograph of a classroom scene, overlaid with a teal tint. A teacher in a plaid shirt stands at the front of the room, facing a class of students. The students are seated at desks, and their backs are to the camera. A whiteboard is visible in the background. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

**WE WORK SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH
EDUCATORS TO SUPPORT GREAT TEACHING
AND ACCELERATE STUDENT LEARNING.**

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Ben Fenton
Chief of Growth and Operations

While I am a relatively new member of the Instruction Partners team (about two months in), my history with the organization began when I joined the board of directors two years ago.

As a board member, I saw the early results demonstrating that this shoulder-to-shoulder approach with schools was working. Having been in the education space for 20 years, I knew of many great organizations working to support schools, but getting to the heart of classroom instructional change offered the best opportunity for real impact.

I was impressed by the true sense of partnership I saw the staff build with school system leaders. It wasn't until I joined the Instruction Partners team that I realized how deeply the organization lives its values. In every interaction with partners, I saw team members share direct but big-hearted feedback about strengths and opportunities. In helping partners plan, the team was both optimistic about what the school could achieve yet practical about how to get there.

These values define our approach to this work, and I believe they also drive our success in partnership renewal, which is one of the biggest positive results of our work over the last two years. We live the values internally, too. I participated in the organization's end-of-year reflection meeting, and was amazed to see a learning-focused, direct conversation about what had and hadn't worked.

As Chief of Growth and Operations, I bring my experience from growing a non-profit that doubled in size every year for four years. As Instruction Partners scales to support more students, we are committed to maintaining our strong team culture, high-quality services, and learning and improvement focus. We are honored to have more demand from the field than we can currently support, and we are planning to partner with more than 200 systems supporting 500,000 students over the next five years.

Our proximity to thousands of classrooms will allow us to go deep and share straightforward, practical advice from the "black box" of what happens between students and teachers every day. I look forward to helping the team scale the successes we're already seeing on instructional improvements as we continue to innovate on the best ways to serve all students.

The Challenge

Over the last three years, we have seen thousands of students in thousands of classrooms and have witnessed the fundamental gap between what kids need to know and what they end up learning.

Recent research indicates more than 90% of students aspire to attend college, and 90% of the time they are doing what they're asked to do in class; in fact, more than half are earning As and Bs.¹ However, the most recent results indicate that only 37% of students are proficient in ELA, and only 33% of students are proficient in math.²

Educators are struggling, too, and not for lack of effort. Teachers work, on average, 53 hours a week. More than 90% of teachers say they welcome feedback from school leaders, but only 30% believe they get timely and useful feedback.³



educators feeling supported

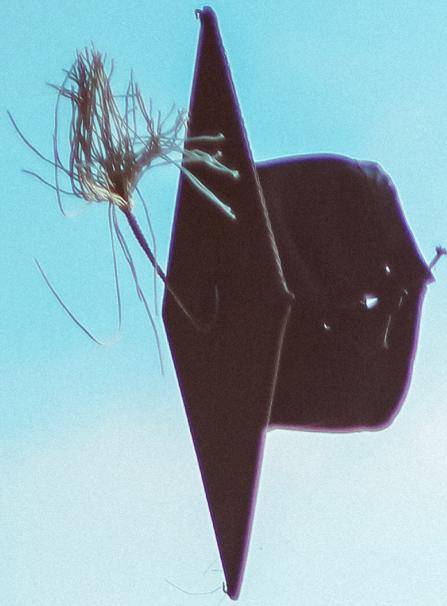
For small school systems, these challenges can be even greater than for large systems while the available supports and resources are almost always fewer. Small systems represent 97% of all school systems in the country and serve 60% of all students (28.7 million). While large urban school systems receive the majority of attention and outside support, small systems serve 45% of the country's students of color and 55% of the nation's students living in poverty.⁴

¹ The Opportunity Myth, TNTP, September 2018, <https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/>

² NAEP (2017)

³ Scholastic.com/primarysources (2012); TN TELL Survey (2017); Fryer (2017); TNTP's The Opportunity Myth (2018)

⁴ The Elementary and Secondary Information System (ELSI), National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/>



Our Approach

Maya Angelou has said, *"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."*

We believe if we can provide support to teachers and school system leaders on the fundamentals of effective instruction (support they want and are asking for) and continuously learn from and share best practices, we can scalably strengthen the quality of instruction and student learning across the country.



Successes from the 2017-2018 School Year

Increased Instructional Excellence

Through our partnership model, we observe instruction by conducting classroom walkthroughs and analyzing student work samples. From initial walkthroughs, we share data, craft an action plan, and support school systems with coaching and development. We then observe classrooms again later in the year to determine how instruction is improving.

Across the 2017-18 school year, we saw observable gains in high-quality instruction as a result of partnerships.

Valued by Partners

Throughout their relationship with us, we ask school system leaders for feedback on the process of working with us and the impact it's driving for students. Two years in a row, more than 80% of our partners re-committed to working with us for another academic year.

Strengthened Team Culture

Our team of instruction-obsessed educators continues to grow as we scale to serve more students. While dramatically growing our team's size and increasing its diversity, 80% of team members report being satisfied with Instruction Partners as a place to work, and 88% would recommend it to a friend.

Expanded Our Reach

From 2016-17 to 2017-18, we expanded our support to 66 partners across three states, reaching 81,000 students.



Malika Anderson
Managing Director of Organizational Development

Two years ago I had a conversation with a student that made me both choke back sobs and jump with joy. I was leading a statewide school turnaround district that had just begun the critical work of returning a struggling high school to the heights at which it had once soared. One day, when I was visiting the high school, I encountered a student leader who had initially expressed apprehension about the changes we had planned. When he saw me, a huge smile swept across his face and he grabbed me in a hug. I asked him what changes he'd observed, and he said, "Ms. Malika, the teachers are really teaching us this year! Now I know that I'm learning something when I go to class."

Wait. What? While I shared the student's excitement about his new learning experience, the fact that just now as a senior, this student was getting a taste of what he should have experienced all along was devastating. Our conversation was a reminder that hit me to my core: teachers are doing their best to teach how and what they know, and students know when their teachers' efforts are resulting in learning... or not. Teachers want help turning their instructional intentions into the learning outcomes students are craving.

This summer, I was invited to spend some time with the Instruction Partners team to reimagine and refocus the organization's mission in a way that communicates the team's commitment to equity. This experience was pivotal in my decision to join the team in August. There was authentic debate about how to shape the mission, but there was never a question about the need to center the mission around Instruction Partners' shoulder-to-shoulder partnership with educators to advance student learning.

As I lead the team's talent and organizational development efforts forward, equitable learning experiences for students are at the heart of everything I do. Emily and I are co-leading the organization's multi-year diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities; you can read more of the detail in the Appendix. It's a commitment our whole team has and one I feel both called and honored to support.

ONLY
TO WIN
FASTER
AN
ONE
SE

Great things

are not done by impulse,
but by a series of

S M A L L T H I N G S

broughttogether.

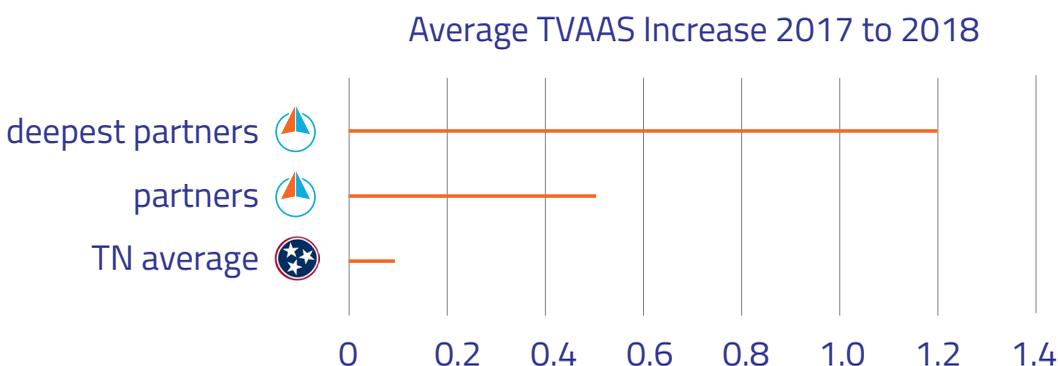
Vincent Van Gogh

**WHAT
WE'RE
LEARNING**

Instructional Support Speeds Growth

Tennessee, Instruction Partners' founding state, uses an academic growth measure that allows us to see data on how our partner systems in the state are performing at a deep level, giving us insight into what's working.

Results from TVAAS (Tennessee's Value-Added Assessment System) for 2017-18 showed that Instruction Partners' schools grew their rate of progress relative to their past rate of progress more than the state average. All of Instruction Partners' school systems in Tennessee (including new, returning, deep support, and light support partners) grew an average of a $\frac{1}{2}$ level on the 5-point scale, and our deepest partners grew 1.2 levels in our subject of focus. We are encouraged that attention to the fundamental supports for good instruction (high-quality materials, great PD to help all educators understand the expectations of the standards, and great coaching for teachers and principals) seems to be leading to faster rates of student learning.



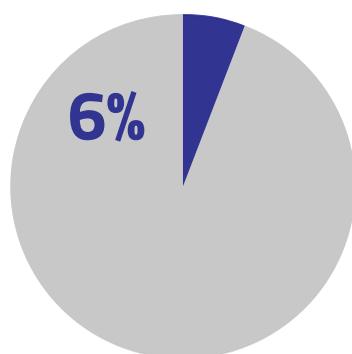
Continued Partnership Speeds Growth

We saw faster growth in positive indicators¹ where we had started partnerships the prior year. In both ELA and math, the second year of partnership yielded accelerated growth compared with first-year results.

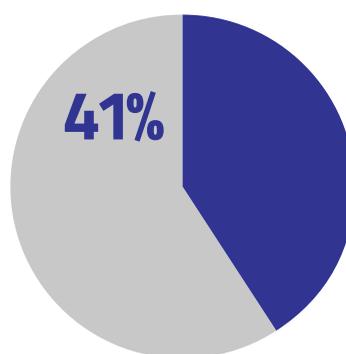
¹ Positive indicators refer to indicators on the Instructional Practice Guide rubric that earn a score of 3 or 4 on a 4-point scale when measured by trained observers.

Leadership is a Multiplier

During school walkthroughs, school leaders are encouraged to participate so they understand instructional trends across classrooms. Now, our own data shows that school leader involvement in the walkthroughs (both baseline and follow-up) makes a powerful difference in results. When school leaders did not join walkthroughs, positive lessons¹ increased 6%, but when they did participate, positive lessons increased 41%.



positive lessons
without
leadership participation



positive lessons
with
leadership participation

Materials Matter

Many of the schools and systems we partner with are seeking a strong curriculum to help support high-quality instruction. Schools systems that adopt stronger materials see the benefits, resulting in double-digit gains in positive lessons. We also observed schools in the first year of curriculum implementation had higher student growth on TVAAS.

We've worked in schools that have adopted the same curriculum yet see dramatic differences in results based on how the curriculum was implemented. This is a familiar pain point for system leaders trying to support instruction and for teachers who need ample time and peer support to make the shifts required. We're leaning into this need from the field with a robust Curriculum Support Guide we'll release in January of 2019. This practical tool will elevate best practices from successful school systems and provides resources to help mitigate common challenges.

¹ Positive lessons are those that receive at least 8 positive indicators on the Instructional Practice Guide rubric as measured by trained observers.

**WHERE
WE'RE
HEADED**

Staying Close to the Field

We have powerful proximity with our partners. From our time spent shoulder to shoulder in classrooms and through extensive conversations with leaders across states, we've seen how the stories in systems and schools unfold over time. We are constantly searching for meaningful correlations that could accelerate the rate of progress across the field.

Meeting More of the Demand for Partnership and Support

Our long-term vision includes partnering with more than **200 systems to reach 500,000 students** over the next five years. In order to make this a reality, we are investing in partners, professional development, culture, people, and systems that will enable us to scale.

Supporting Science Success

Science standards and assessments are changing, and after a chapter of inattention, school and system leaders are eager for support. Students are highly interested in STEM careers but are often unprepared for higher level coursework. We have the opportunity to learn from the supports that came too late in the math and ELA transition to better serve educators and students in science.

Advancing Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We believe there is justice in the standards and justice in consistently high expectations for the preparation of all students to live lives of purpose and self-determination. We strive to live out our commitment to equity both in our work with partners and our work with each other internally.

Our mission creates urgency to ensure every student gets access to an excellent education each year in their schools as a matter of justice.

APPENDIX



INSTRUCTION PARTNERS
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

JUNE 30, 2018

(With Comparative Totals for 2017)

Instruction Partners has received clean financial audit results every year, including 2018.

ASSETS

	2018	2017
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$2,291,741	\$1,146,030
Accounts receivable	168,589	741,968
Contributions receivable	100,000	150,000
Total current assets	2,560,330	2,037,998
Leasehold improvements, net	13,818	22,382
Other assets	31,599	13,043
Total assets	\$2,605,747	\$2,073,423

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

	2018	2017
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$617,047	\$194,386
Unearned revenues	971,785	624,999
Total liabilities	1,588,832	819,385
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	388,182	515,202
Temporarily restricted	628,733	738,836
Total net assets	1,016,915	1,254,038
Total liabilities and net assets	\$2,605,747	\$2,073,423

INSTRUCTION PARTNERS
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
 JUNE 30, 2018
 (With Comparative Totals for 2017)

	2018 Total	2017 Total
Support and revenues:		
Contributions	\$2,201,231	\$2,099,468
Service revenue	2,784,460	1,080,027
Other income	443	171
Net assets released from restriction	-	-
Total support and revenues	4,986,134	3,179,666
Expenses:		
Program services	4,645,071	2,019,265
Administrative and general	578,186	266,647
Total expenses	5,223,257	2,285,912
Change in net assets	(237,123)	893,754
Net assets at beginning of the year	1,254,038	360,284
Net assets at end of the year	\$1,016,915	\$1,254,038

INSTRUCTION PARTNERS
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
JUNE 30, 2018
(With Comparative Totals for 2017)

	2018	2017
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$(237,123)	\$893,754
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	8,564	-
Decrease (increase) in accounts receivable	573,379	(665,309)
Decrease (increase) in contributions receivable	50,000	(150,000)
Increase in other assets	(18,556)	(13,043)
Increase in accounts payable	422,661	148,370
Increase in unearned revenues	346,786	577,161
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,145,711	790,933
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchases of equipment	-	(22,382)
Net cash used in investing activities	-	(22,382)
Net increase in cash	1,145,711	768,551
Cash, beginning of the year	1,146,030	377,479
Cash, end of the year	\$2,291,741	\$1,146,030

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Beliefs, Goals, and What It Means in Our Actions

Our Commitment to Diversity:

Beliefs:

- We live in a richly diverse country and we believe this diversity is a source of strength, power, and joy.
- We believe our shared humanity and innate capacity for empathy transcend our differences and that we are called to know, seek out and love across our differences.
- Given our mission, we believe that individuals who share the background of historically underserved student subgroups bring additional, valuable perspectives to our team. We commit to our work being led by those with personal experience with the challenges faced by students in poverty, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities.
- We believe our orientation towards partnership means we need to work with a wide range of individuals in a respectful and collaborative manner.

3-Year Goals:

By FY2021:

- Team diversity that matches or exceeds the diversity of the students we serve across the following four priority subgroups: person of color, English Language Learner, personal experience with poverty, personal experience with a disability/caregiver of a person with a disability
- Board diversity matches or exceeds the diversity of the students we serve in our priority subgroups
- Diversity of Standards Bootcamps Content Coaches exceeds the diversity of that state's students in our priority subgroups

Actions:

Internal engagement:

- We will specifically seek out, hire, and leverage the diverse and student-aligned experiences of team members at every level of the organization.
- We will proactively pursue partnerships and spend disproportionate effort recruiting for both full-time and part-time staff members who grew up in poverty, staff members of color, individuals with disabilities, and those who grew up with English as a second language.
- We will get to know each other across lines of difference and seek to build authentic relationships and understanding.
- We will not factor prior compensation into compensation offers in order to not perpetuate inequity in compensation in building a diverse team.
- We will make Instruction Partners an inclusive environment and we will see this as centrally linked to our diversity (see next section).

Our Commitment to Equity:

Beliefs:

- We seek to become a country where all students get access to the knowledge and skills they need to continue their education, achieve economic security and contribute their talents to their communities. We view access to an excellent education for all students as a matter of justice. We believe there is justice in the standards and justice in consistent expectations for the preparation of all students.
- We know students in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners are enrolled in every school and district in this country. Research has shown that, when given access to rigorous curricula and aligned instructional experiences, students in all identity groups achieve at a high level.
- We also know that students in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners are at greatest risk for lowered expectations because of systemic racism and unconscious bias. We know we all unconsciously form stereotypes and prejudices of dissimilar social groups – including but not limited to different races and ethnicities – stemming from the tendency to categorize. We believe self-awareness of our own biases is an essential step in addressing the barriers to excellent education for all students and interacting productively across lines of difference in our work together.
- We know that we must live out our commitment to equity both in our work with partners and our work with each other internally.

3-Year Goals:

By FY2021:

- In our partnerships, we will not only set goals and hold ourselves accountable for student growth in aggregate, we will set goals and hold ourselves accountable for accelerated growth for prioritized student subgroups (aligned to our partners' goals and AMOs).

Actions:

Partner engagement:

- We will specifically look for evidence of the alignment of materials and instruction to the standards to ensure equitable access to rigorous instruction.
- We will ensure walkthroughs include observations of the instruction for every group of students in the school.
- We will build out our knowledge and practice supports for intervention/RTI to better understand the practices that power accelerated rates of progress for students behind grade level.
- We will dedicate additional time and resources to support recruitment efforts and new site development in districts and states with higher-than-average populations of students in poverty, students of color, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.
- We will seek out and advance research on strategies and resources that will support each prioritized subgroup of students.
- We will help districts increase the diversity of authors in curriculum selection and provide feedback to publishers when there is a high-quality set of materials that does not include this critical representation – both for the sake of students who share that identity and those who do not.
- We will set the foundation of our work with partners on a vision of equitable access to great instruction and we will develop strategies and common approaches that help us identify when unconscious bias is at play for our partners and how to call this out in a direct and loving way.

Internal engagement:

- We will spend time building awareness of our own unconscious biases.
- In our work within our team, we will review language of job descriptions to ensure equitable access.
- We will not factor prior compensation into compensation offers in order to not perpetuate inequity in compensation in building a diverse team.

Our Commitment to Inclusion:

Beliefs:

- We know people demonstrate their talent in different ways. To be our best and get the best out of our diverse team, we need to be open to different models of excellence. We also believe the best way to create an inclusive culture is to be as transparent as possible about the rules of the game and the keys to success.
- We believe our shared mission creates urgency to ensure every student gets access to an excellent education every year in their schools. We believe our orientation towards partnership means we need to work with a wide range of individuals in a respectful, loving, and collaborative manner to live out this mission.
- We commit to build and nurture a team culture that is respectful and inclusive for all (e.g., ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, political spectrum, religion, age, etc.). We do not extend the opportunity for team members or partners to wield hate and divisiveness in our work and relationships.
- We will take special care to include and make welcome on our team people of color, persons who have experienced poverty, individuals with a personal or caregiving experience with a disability, and immigrants who were or are English language learners.

3-Year Goals:

By FY2021:

- No gaps (within a normal margin of difference) in the self-reported staff experience by subgroup for the four prioritized groups – especially on welcoming environment
- No negative gaps in staff retention by subgroup

Actions:**Partner engagement:**

- We will make our operating and performance evaluations practice transparent so everyone knows the rules of the game and what success looks like and requires.
- We will ensure all managers do intentional work understanding their unconscious biases and the role these biases play in management, led by experienced facilitators.
- We will conduct onboarding for all staff members on how we work together across lines of difference.
- We will create mentorship opportunities within identity groups so all staff members see what a career trajectory looks like.

External partnership:

- We will attend to teacher inclusiveness in action planning, by requesting the inclusion of special education and English as a Second Language teachers and leaders in school planning.
- We will take note of and make explicit whose voices are being included and whose are not in planning to encourage more expansive participation.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Emily Freitag,

Co-founder and CEO

Ben Fenton,

Chief of Growth and Operations

Malika Anderson,

Managing Director of Organizational Development

Susie Bunch,

Senior Strategy Advisor and Director of District Engagement

Jordan Brophy-Hilton,

Managing Director of Engagement

Luke Kohlmoos,

Co-founder and Managing Director of Data and Insight

Laura Mann,

Senior Director of Communications

Brittany McCullough,

Director of Professional Development Operations

Elizabeth Ramsey,

Senior Managing Director of Program

Justin Testerman,

Executive Director - Innovation Partnerships

Bonnie Williamson,

Director of Coordination, Chief of Staff

Marques Whitmire,

Managing Director of Finance and Administration

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sandra Alberti,

Senior Fellow, Strategic Partnerships at Student Achievement Partners

David K. Cohen,

John Dewey Collegiate Professor of Education and Professor of Public Policy at the University of Michigan

Rick Cruz,

Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships at College Board

Emily Freitag,

CEO of Instruction Partners and former Assistant Commissioner of Curriculum and Instruction at the Tennessee Department of Education

Kira Orange-Jones,

Senior Vice President at Teach for America

Joanne Weiss,

Independent consultant on education programs, technologies, and policy

Marcus Whitney,

CEO of Health: Further and President and Founding Partner of Jumpstart Foundry

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