



— 2017 —
ANNUAL REPORT

UNLOCKING STUDENT POTENTIAL

**WE WORK WITH SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE
CLASSROOM TEACHING SO THAT
STUDENTS LEARN MORE.**

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INTRODUCTION



Seven years ago, states committed to adopting K-12 academic standards that would better prepare students for college and careers. Based on evidence, the standards marked a progression of critical knowledge that would equip students with the skills they need to compete. States made this move so that graduation would signify not only the completion of K-12 education, but actual readiness for the demands of postsecondary education.

The adoption of these standards was never going to be enough on its own. To fulfill their promise, we would need to see a shift to a new way of teaching and learning. Schools across the nation have invested time, effort, and money to support this transition, but too often, despite hard work, they experience disappointing results and slow progress. Teachers and leaders want to do what works to support their students but often don't know exactly what that is.

The good news is that with the standards, we can identify the necessary knowledge and skills teachers must master to support student learning. Great teachers are not born, they can be built. And we can empirically learn from the success stories to unpack what drives better results. That is why I'm so glad to be a part of Instruction Partners. Instruction Partners is uniquely focused on working with teachers and leaders to build capacity. It is about real support that is practical, timely, and laser-focused on instruction.

In education, we know the policy initiatives, and we have measures of student results, but we don't have much insight into the specific, teachable practices that make a difference. We are now much clearer on the right outcomes, but we still don't have much information about what happens in the "black box" of teacher-student interactions. I am convinced Instruction Partners is going to be a critical force, shining a light into that black box to the benefit of partners, teachers, and ultimately, the students. We are already seeing positive progress, and I can't wait to see what we discover in the years to come.

Sandra Alberti

*Director of State and District Partnerships and Professional Development for Student Achievement Partners,
Instruction Partners Board Chair*

HOW INSTRUCTION PARTNERS WORKS

The Challenge

Teachers and principals know the extraordinary promise of their students. Yet too often, they see – with distress – their students falling short. Every year, schools pour themselves into efforts to improve learning with inconsistent results and little clarity about what worked. At Instruction Partners, formerly District to District, we believe that if we can understand the practical actions behind places of significant student growth – the unglamorous stuff that is often overlooked, such as coaching models, curriculum design choices, and the structure of teacher professional development – we can translate it into effective support for educators. And when teachers have the right supports in place, we can make every classroom a place of great learning that prepares students for successful, rewarding lives.



Our Solutions

Instruction Partners works shoulder-to-shoulder with teachers and leaders to improve the quality of instruction in core academics. We do two things:

1. District & School Partnership

We partner with districts and schools through cycles of observation, planning, and action to support continuous improvement of daily instruction. We don't push particular programs, but rather engage in a collaborative process to help leaders chart the course that makes sense in their context. We specialize in small school districts, which may have limited capacity but can make big changes fast.

2. Teacher & Leader Support

We provide teachers, instructional coaches, principals, and supervisors practical professional development, as well as the opportunity to connect with others in their role, to help understand what works in classrooms.

Our Goals

In our work we aim for three outcomes:

- Satisfaction – Our partners and participants will value the support they receive, as measured by satisfaction, retention, and referral rates.
- Change in Instructional Practice – Observed instruction will improve every year, as measured by trained observers using a content-based teaching rubric.
- Student Impact – Students in partner districts and participant classrooms will learn more, as measured by state tests.

LOOKING BACK ON 2016-17

This was year two for Instruction Partners and it was a big year. We met, and in many cases exceeded, goals in each of our priority areas, and we learned a great deal about how to support the work of teachers, schools, and districts at scale.



We saw instruction improve across our partner districts. We saw a 13 percentage point increase in the volume of positive lessons – from 12 percent to 25 percent. For a more detailed account of the lessons learned about what drove instructional improvement, visit <https://instructionpartners.org/resources/lessons-learned>.



Our partners found significant value in the work. 87 percent of partners and training participants said they would recommend Instruction Partners to a colleague. We also saw more than 80 percent of districts that work with Instruction Partners renew their contract for support.



We found interest in support and grew our reach. We had more than 99 districts engage with us across all service lines in the past year, which represents more than 35 percent of districts in our markets. We saw an increase in partnerships from 22 districts to 38, with many districts increasing the scope of their work.



We expanded our services. We added four new lines of service over the past year, including:

- **Curriculum Collaboratives:** Grade- and content-specific virtual meetings led either by a peer or a content expert, focused on deepening teacher content knowledge and improving instructional practice. About 30 participants took part in four total Collaboratives, which met four to eight times during the year.

- **Summer Bootcamps:** Two-day deep dives into one particular domain of the standards, such as reading informational texts in 11th-grade ELA, or expressions and equations in seventh-grade math. Offered in person during June and July in Tennessee, we had 375 teachers attend across 18 different tracks.

- **System Leader Collaboratives:** Half-day meetings with academic leaders at the district level. Participants shared resources, observed classrooms, and discussed common problems and solutions.

- **Middle School Coaching Pilot:** This work, currently focused in Florida, is aimed at helping instructional coaches in middle schools learn to redeliver training on standards and build their content knowledge and academic coaching skills.



We increased service revenue to cover more of our cost. From year one to year two, we saw a 240 percent increase in service revenue from districts and grew the share of costs covered by service revenue from 22 percent to 34 percent. Our committed revenue for this year already represents another 418 percent increase in service revenue from districts - from \$354,000 to \$1.48 million.



We grew our team and built a strong team culture. 100 percent of our team reported they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with Instruction Partners as a place to work. To support an expanded number of partners and new training offerings, we added 16 new full-time staff members and 112 part-time content coaches – excellent educators, who work with us in their time off as content coaches to extend their reach and impact. We also grew our board to eight members. While increasing the size of our team, we significantly increased the diversity of our team and leadership.



We found a new home and managed our money. In June, we secured and renovated a new space in East Nashville that became Instruction Partners' home office – we invite you to come visit! Additionally, for the second consecutive year, we've completed our annual financial audit with no negative findings.

**OUR FIRST
LOOK AT
STUDENT
GROWTH
DATA**

Recently, we got our first insight into student growth since our launch. Tennessee uses TVAAS to measure student growth, which is a measure of how much students grow academically, rather than their absolute proficiency. For more on TVAAS, you can visit www.tn.gov/education/topic/tvaas. These results are from the first year of data on the new statewide assessment in Tennessee, TNReady. Our pilot included 36 schools across 12 districts, and we looked at the school-level results.

The fascinating thing about our work is that we get to gather data on the state of daily instruction at snapshots in time, and we can now examine the relationship between these measures of instruction and measures of student growth. As lovers of data, we are excited to dig in and learn all we can, but results are early and we know there are limits on what we can learn from one year of data.

Here are some preliminary findings:

1. We are seeing a statistically significant relationship between observed instruction and growth on TVAAS.
2. Schools with stronger observation data early in the year tended to see more student growth.

Overall, the schools we work with showed a range of student growth during this first year, fairly consistent with our expectations. Forty-two percent of our partner schools received 3s, 4s, and 5s on TVAAS in the subjects we worked with them in.

WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY ABOUT US



I wish we would've been a part of Instruction Partners since my first year as a superintendent. This small city will be a testimony for Instruction Partners and I can't wait for it to happen.

Versie Hamlett,
Director, Humboldt City Schools



My only regret is that we only had a few principals in the room, not my entire department! The training was refreshing with about a million 'aha!' moments for me! I feel like Instruction Partners asked very tough questions that made us think. What I appreciated so much was that they used the time to lead us through an exercise and guided us with questions until we arrived at the answers ourselves.

Olivia Kuhens,
ELA teacher, Anderson County Schools



My experience as a participant in Instruction Partners' virtual support community was wonderful. I gained insight from the other teachers who were experiencing similar issues as educators. We, as a group, learned to dig deeper into a standard to make it possible for students to understand. We worked on math tasks that allowed us to also feel like some of the students that are in our classes. I would definitely participate again.

Frenchie T. Fuller,

Fourth-grade math and science teacher, Jackson-Madison County Schools



For many of our teachers, Instruction Partners' Summer Bootcamp has rejuvenated their passion for teaching, simply because they are now looking at their standards through a different lens. Upon going back into teachers' classrooms who attended the training, we were able to see an improvement in teaching! This literally happened during a one month period! It wasn't that our teachers were doing anything wrong before, but on subsequent visits, we were able to see more attention to the standards, focus on the rigor of that particular grade, and more text-driven work.

Amanda Powers,

Reading specialist, Anderson County Schools



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

Everything we have learned has reinforced the underlying hypotheses of our work:

1. There are practical things teachers and leaders can do to improve instruction,
2. They want the support, and
3. When instruction gets better, students learn more.

The actions that power improvement translate across school, district, and state lines. We are convinced we can see better results and can, within our current structure and model of school support, increase the pace of improvement with the right practical support.

We have consistently found hunger among educators for help to serve their students well. When priced affordably, we have learned there is a demand for the type of help that Instruction Partners offers, and we expect this demand exists across state lines.

We know we have so much more to learn. While we have evidence that there is a relationship between observed daily instruction and student growth, we need to understand more about the nuances of that relationship and the pace of change. We have started to identify theories, but we have much more to learn about which specific interventions and series of actions lead to instructional change, as well as how this operates similarly and differently across subjects. We also have more to learn about what knowledge and skills are necessary for each educator role – teachers, coaches, principals and CAOs – in order to unlock student learning. Once we figure that out, we have to learn how to structure our support in order to equip educators.

Similarly, we have a great deal to learn about our own design and model, such as which services or service combinations lead to the greatest rate of progress. Lastly, we have more to learn about the market, including how much of our work it will sustain, what the lifecycle of our partnerships looks like, and the conditions that must exist to best support the work.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED

**PRIORITIES FOR
THE 2017-18 YEAR**



Deliver Quality Services That Strengthen Student Learning

Right now, we are focused on delivering for the partners we are working with this school year. We want to continue to see daily instruction get better, and we want to see their students' academic achievement increase faster than the state average every year. While doing the work, we want to learn every lesson we can and incorporate them in our model, so we can better help partners in the future.

Goals:

75% of schools meet the growth targets for student learning

15% increase in positive lessons over their baseline or previous visit

75% of participants achieve the learning targets set for each course

50% of respondents strongly agree that the Instruction Partners course or event was a valuable use of their time

75% of partners work with us the next year



Grow the Organization

To support more students and fuel our collective learning, we will continue to grow where there is demand. We believe growing will help us learn faster and serve our partners better. We seek to grow our reach within our current states, while beginning to add new ones. To do this, we will maintain our focus hiring local staff in each new region.

Goals:

60 systems engaged in district and school partnership in our current states

2k teachers and leaders engaged directly in support

1-2 new states



Build and Strengthen Financial Base and Organizational Systems

We aim to build a strong and healthy organization that can support instructional improvement for many years to come. This requires financial sustainability, driven largely by district and service revenue, with philanthropy playing a critical role fueling research and development. This also requires strong financial systems and organizational processes.

Goals:

Earn \$2.35M in direct-from-district revenue

Earn \$3.25M in service revenue

Raise \$2.67M in philanthropic support

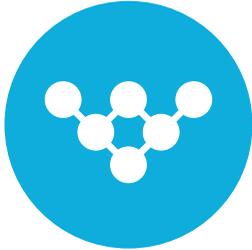


Support Strong Culture

We're proud that our staff considers Instruction Partners such a great place to work. We want to build a vibrant culture that feeds and supports our effectiveness, based on the diverse perspectives of our team. To do that, we must hire great people, promote a strong culture, manage effectively, and support the learning of all members of the team.

Goals:

- Continue to see strong results on our internal survey, which includes indicators on the strength of our mission, teamwork, management, and employee growth.
- Articulate organizational commitment to diversity, equity and inclusiveness.



Share What We Learn

We're in classrooms nearly every day, learning as much as we can about how to improve instruction. We've already begun sharing the lessons we learn with external audiences and we plan to do much more in the coming year.

Goals:

- Send quarterly InstructUPdates newsletter to all partners
- Release 2-4 white papers
- Launch blog

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Instruction Partners is working to make every classroom a place of great learning that prepares students for successful, rewarding lives. We believe that this vision is attainable through more focused, rigorous instruction across systems. We know that this work can transform the learning of today, and also unlock the potential of educators and learners for future generations.

TO GET THERE, WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP. THIS INCLUDES:

Continued financial support.

We will operate on a greater portion of earned income each year, but philanthropic funding will always serve as an important support to our research and programmatic services. We appreciate consideration and support.

Connections that will help us grow.

As we scale the number of schools and districts in our network, we are counting on our supporters and friends to help connect us with leaders and educators ready to improve instruction. We appreciate you spreading the word.

Ideas and knowledge that will help us refine our understanding of effective instruction and our model for support.

At Instruction Partners, we draw upon the expertise of educators, researchers, and administrators to improve instruction. We appreciate your contributions toward this effort so we can help students learn more.

APPENDIX

INSTRUCTION PARTNERS STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION JUNE 30, 2017

(With Comparative Totals for 2016)

ASSETS

Current assets:	2017	2016
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,146,030	\$377,479
Accounts receivable	\$741,968	\$76,659
Contributions receivable	150,000	-
Total current assets	2,037,998	454,138
Property & equipment, net	22,382	-
Other assets:	13,043	-
Total assets	\$2,073,423	\$454,138

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$194,386	\$46,016
Unearned revenues	624,999	47,838
Total liabilities	819,385	93,854
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	515,201	257,717
Temporarily restricted	738,837	102,567
Total net assets	1,254,038	360,284
Total liabilities and net assets	\$2,073,423	\$454,138

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2017 Total	2016 Total
Support and revenues:				
Contributions	\$1,196,578	\$902,890	\$2,099,468	\$700,000
Contributed services	-	-	-	16,931
Service revenue	1,080,027	-	1,080,027	201,751
Other income	171	-	171	37
Net assets released from Restriction	266,620	(266,620)	-	-
Total support and revenues	2,543,396	636,270	3,179,666	918,719
Expenses:				
Program services	2,019,265	-	2,019,265	450,668
Administrative and general	266,647	-	266,647	107,767
Total expenses	2,285,912	-	2,285,912	558,435
Change in net assets	257,484	636,270	893,754	360,284
Net assets at beginning of the period	257,717	102,567	360,284	-
Net assets at end of period	\$515,201	\$738,837	\$1,254,038	\$360,284



INSTRUCTION PARTNERS STAFF ROSTER

Emily Freitag: CEO

Susie Bunch: Executive Director - Tennessee

Aaron Smith: Executive Director - Florida

Luke Kohlmoos: Managing Director of Data & Insight

Nicole Roberts Pratt: Managing Director of Teacher & Leader Support

Elizabeth Ramsey: Managing Director of District & School Partnership

Marques Whitmire: Managing Director of Finance & Administration

Talitha Chestnut: Director of Instructional Support

Dory Creech: Director of Instructional Support

Bryan Hearn: Director of Instructional Support

John Prince: Director of Instructional Support

Golda Sharpe: Director of Instructional Support

LaQuisha Oliver: Director of Training Development

Heather Genz: ELA Lead

Christina Gonzalez: ELA Lead

Julie Parrish: ELA Lead

Liz Riggs: ELA Lead

Brian Dean: Math Lead

Rebecca Few: Math Lead

Tom Haggerty: Technology and Systems Lead

Bonnie Williamson: Team Coordination Lead

Jessica Holter: Teacher & Leader Support Coordinator

William Paine: Finance & Administration Coordinator

Lara Aleman: Operations Coordinator

Vanessa Owens: Operations Coordinator



ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Executive Directors (ED)

These are the leaders of each state, responsible for all team members on their respective state's team.

Managing Directors

These are the leaders of "functional teams" that tackle areas like finance, training, data, and district support.

Directors of Instructional Support (DIS)

These are the leaders of on-the-ground district work, and are responsible for a set of districts within their region/state.

ELA and Math Leads

These are the math and ELA experts who work with DISes to support district work, along with flexing across some design/development work.

Operations Coordinators

These are the masterminds behind logistics for events, materials, managing part-time folks, scheduling travel, and more.

OUR BOARD

Sandra Alberti, Board Chair

Director of State and District Partnerships and PD for Student Achievement Partners

Chris Barbic

Senior Education Fellow at the Arnold Foundation and former Superintendent of the Achievement School District

David 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

Ben Fenton

Senior Advisor for Systemic Impact for Turnaround for Children

Emily Freitag

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

Kira Orange-Jones

Executive Director of Teach for America - New Orleans

Joanne Weiss

Independent consultant on education programs, technologies, and policy

Marcus Whitney

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

OUR SUPPORTERS

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Louis C. Calder Foundation

Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation

Memphis Education Foundation

Overdeck Family Foundation

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Vanguard Charitable Fund

The ZOOM Foundation



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