

The Kansas Learning Network and School Improvement: An Evaluation of the Implementation Coach Program

Prepared for Cross & Jofus by
Laurent Rigal

January 20, 2012

Introduction

The Kansas Learning Network (KLN) is a collaborative project between Cross & Jofthus, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and districts and schools throughout the state that have been identified as “in need of improvement” under the No Child Left Behind Act. The program aims to create a sustainable district- and school-improvement process throughout Kansas by using a new model based on cooperation and coherence, rather than the traditional top-down approach typically used in reform.

In 2009, Cross & Jofthus, contracted by KSDE, started providing the 32 Title I schools identified as “on improvement,” “corrective action,” or “restructuring” with technical assistance by placing an implementation coach (IC) in each school. Cross & Jofthus hires, trains, and supervises the ICs and manages the overall program. The role of the IC is to work directly with principals and school-leadership teams in the development and implementation of the school-improvement plan, while also serving the role of liaison between KDSE, the district, and schools. This practice is intended to foster reflective practice and dialogue within the school during the improvement process. The coaches submit logs to KLN that detail current accomplishments and challenges; these results ultimately lead to recommendations for future action. Currently in its third year (serving 43 schools in 2011-12 school year), the IC program has been implemented in 32 Title I schools identified for improvement during the 2009-10 school year and in 37 Title I schools identified for improvement in the 2010-11 school year.

This report serves as an addendum to the evaluation conducted of the IC program in May 2011. The goal of this addendum is to assess impacted schools’ test scores from the Kansas State Assessment and adequate year progress (AYP) determinations from Spring and Summer of 2011 (not available in time to be included in last year’s evaluation). Although evaluators cannot judge the impact of the IC programs on the schools,¹ such an assessment provides an important early indicator of the IC program’s success.

Methodology

An analysis of student achievement data was used to begin to understand the efficacy of the IC program on student achievement. The analysis of achievement data was conducted using students’ aggregate performance levels, determined by the Kansas State Department of Education, on the Kansas State Assessment. The researchers specifically looked at changes in the percentage of students achieving proficiency or better on the state assessment in math and reading since the implementation of the IC program, as well as the number and percentage of schools demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined by KSDE.

Since the goal of the evaluation was to compare students’ achievement before and through the implementation of the KLN program, the 31 schools that took part in the program during its first year of implementation (a 32nd school was restructured at the end of the school year and was not

¹ To truly assess impact, a randomized controlled trial would need to be conducted.

KLN IC PROGRAM EVALUATION

included in the study) were included in the study as well as the 37 schools that took part in the program in its second year of implementation (2010-11).

As averaging achievement levels across schools or across grades within schools was not possible, the percentage of students scoring proficient or better in math and reading were collected for each grade and in all schools for the 2008~2009, 2009~2010, and 2010~2011 school years (see Appendix A) using the official data from KSDE (KSDE, 2011a).

The researchers collected 190 pairs of math and reading test scores for the first year of implementation and 224 for the second year. For the first year of implementation and for all 31 schools, one pair of test scores corresponds to the year before the implementation of the IC program (in this case 2008-09) and the other pair for the first year after implementation of the program (2009-10). For the second year of implementation, for the 12 new schools added to the program, one pair of test scores corresponds to the year before the implementation of the IC program (2009-10) and the other pair for their first year after implementation of the program (2010-11); for the 25 schools that were already part of the program, one pair of test scores corresponds to the first year after implementation of the program and the other pair for their second year after implementation of the program.

The pair of test scores for consecutive years were compared to each other to identify an increase, decrease, or no significant change in students' achievement after implementation of the program. The cutoff point to characterize a significant change in test score was set at +5% for an increase in test score or -5% for a decrease in test score. For example, for an enrollment of 200 students in one grade, 10 more students would have to score proficient or better than the previous year for a change to be seen as significant. We acknowledge that such cutoff point is somewhat arbitrary, but it does provide a valid description of the changes in test scores in the schools where the program was implemented; a different cutoff point would not change the overall trend that is described in this analysis.

Findings: Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better

After the first year of implementation of the IC program, 94 sets of test scores (50%) representing all the state's schools on improvement showed a significant increase, 39 cases (20%) showed a significant decrease, and 57 cases (30%) did not show a significant change (see Table 1 for a summary of results). For the second year of implementation, out of the 224 pairs of test scores, 110 cases (49%) showed a significant increase in test scores, 88 cases (40%) showed a significant decrease, and 26 cases (11%) did not show a significant change.

These positive results become even more positive when one considers two-year changes in achievement for the 25 schools who participated in the IC program in both 2009-10 and 2010-11). For these schools, 105 of the 154 (68.2%) test scores showed a significant increase, 34 cases (22.1%) did not show any significant change, and only 15 cases (9.7%) showed a significant decrease. Over the same time period, statewide test scores in Kansas were unchanged for all grade levels in both math and reading.

Table 1: Analysis of Changes in Students’ Test Scores between 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, between 2009-10 and 2010-11, and between 2008-09 and 2010-11

Years of study	Number of schools	Number of test scores	Number (%) of test scores showing significant gain	Number (%) of test scores not showing significant change	Number (%) of test scores showing significant decrease
2008–09 to 2009–10	31	190	94 (49.47%)	57 (30%)	39 (20.53%)
2009–10 to 2010–11	37	224	110 (49.11%)	28 (11.06%)	88 (39.83%)
2008–09 to 2010–11	25	154	105 (68.18%)	34 (22.08%)	15 (9.74%)

Findings: Schools Demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress

The researchers also compared the number of schools demonstrating AYP (as determined by KSDE) before the implementation of the IC program to the number of schools demonstrating AYP after first and second year of implementation of the IC program. The 32 schools in which the IC program was implemented during the year 2009-10 (Cohort 1) and the 37 schools in which the IC program was implemented during the year 2010-11 were included in this study. Out of the 32 Cohort 1 schools, six (18.8%) made AYP in 2009 *before implementation* of the program. These six schools made AYP again in 2010 and went off the improvement list after one year of implementation of the IC program. A seventh Cohort 1 school was restructured in 2010. Out of the remaining 25 Cohort 1 schools, 15 made AYP in 2010 (after one year in the program) and two more made AYP in the only area for which they were identified for improvement. In conclusion, 17 of the 25 schools (68.0%) still in the program made AYP for the first time since being on the improvement list after one year of implementation. When adding the six schools that went off the improvement list after one year of implementation, a total of 23

KLN IC PROGRAM EVALUATION

schools out of 32 schools (72.0%) made AYP after the first year of implementation (see Table 2 and Figure 1, below).

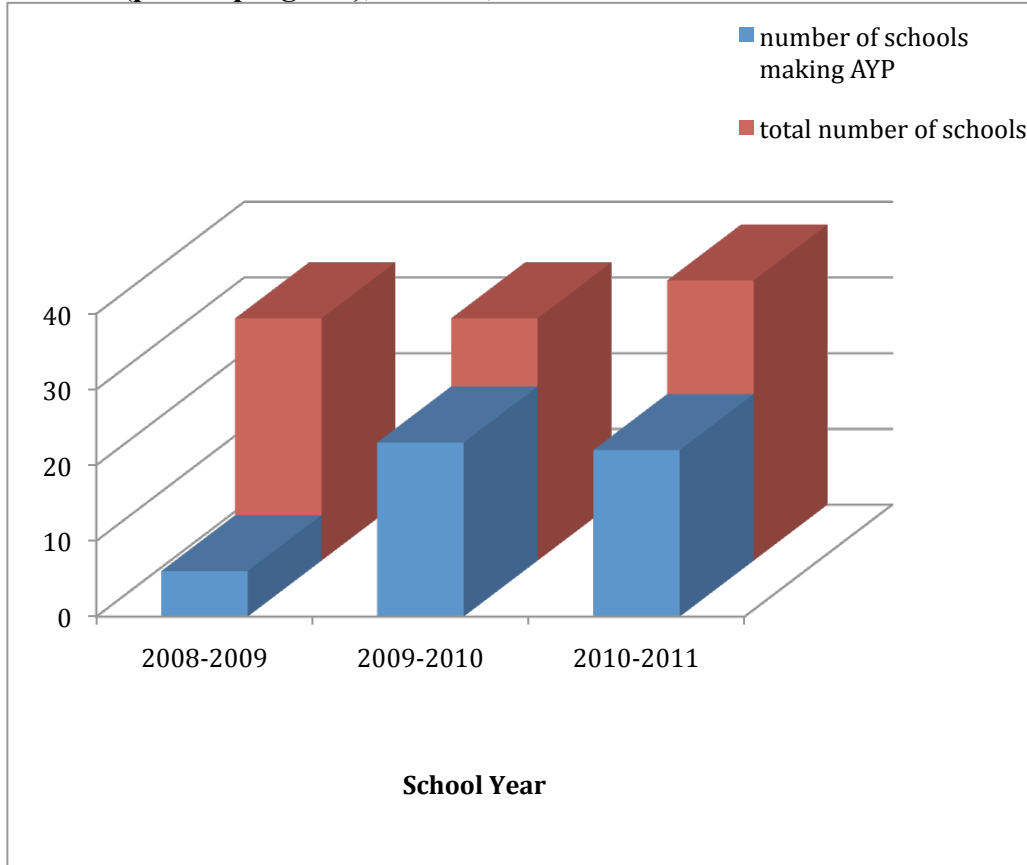
After the second year of the IC program (2010-11), 11 of the remaining 25 Cohort 1 schools made AYP for the second consecutive year and as a consequence were taken off the state's improvement list. In addition, 11 out of the 12 schools in their first year of IC implementation made AYP, for a total of 22 schools out of 37 (59.5%) that were implementing the IC program demonstrating AYP for the 2010-11 school year (see Table 2 and Figure 1, below). In both cases, results for the last year before implementation of the program are shown as comparison.

Table 2: Number and Percentage of Schools Demonstrating AYP for the School Years 2008-2009 (pre-IC program), 2009-10, and 2010-11

School year	Number of schools	Number of schools making AYP
2008-09*	32	6 (18.8%)
2009-10	32	23 (71.8%)
2010-11	37	22 (59.5%)

* Schools were not part of KLN during the school year and are included only as comparison.

Figure 1: Comparison of the Number of Schools Demonstrating AYP in 2008-09 (pre-IC program), 2009-10, and 2010-11



References

KSDE (2011a). *Report card*. Kansas State Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://online.ksde.org/rcard/searchpage.aspx>

KSDE (2011b). *Public Schools and District Not Making AYP 2011*. Kansas State Department of Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Title%20Programs%20and%20Services/2011%20Not%20Making%20AYP%20Schools%20and%20Districts.pdf>