

Improving Teaching Effectiveness

The INTENSIVE PARTNERSHIPS *for* EFFECTIVE TEACHING
Through 2015–2016
ADDENDUM

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Preface

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching (IP) in the 2009–2010 school year.¹ After thorough screening, the foundation identified seven IP sites—three school districts and four charter management organizations—to implement teacher-evaluation systems and related human-relations reforms patterned on a common design over a six-year period.² The foundation also selected the RAND Corporation and its partner, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), to evaluate the IP efforts. The evaluation began in July 2010 and collected data annually for six school years, from 2010–2011 through 2015–2016.

The RAND/AIR team produced three interim reports and two journal articles:³

- Brian M. Stecher, Michael S. Garet, Laura S. Hamilton, Elizabeth D. Steiner, Abby Robyn, Jeffrey Poirier, Deborah Holtzman, Eleanor S. Fulbeck, Jay Chambers, and Iliana Brodziak de los Reyes, *Improving Teaching Effectiveness: Implementation—The Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching Through 2013–2014*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1295-BMGF, 2016
- Matthew D. Baird, John Engberg, Gerald Hunter, and Benjamin Master, *Improving Teaching Effectiveness: Access to Effective Teaching—The Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching Through 2013–2014*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1295/4-BMGF, 2016
- Italo A. Gutierrez, Gabriel Weinberger, and John Engberg, *Improving Teaching Effectiveness: Impact on Student Outcomes—The Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching Through 2013–2014*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1295/3-1-BMGF, 2016
- Gema Zamarro, John Engberg, Juan Esteban Saavedra, and Jennifer Steele, “Disentangling Disadvantage: Can We Distinguish Good Teaching from Classroom Composition?” *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2015, pp. 84–111
- Brian Stecher, Mike Garet, Deborah Holtzman, and Laura Hamilton, “Implementing Measures of Teacher Effectiveness,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 94, No. 3, November 2012, pp. 39–43.

The present report encompasses the full IP initiative, describing its design, implementation, and impact on teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. This study was undertaken by RAND Education and AIR. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation sponsored the research. It should be of interest to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who want to understand the

¹ In the interest of concision, we use the year pair alone, without *school year*, to indicate a school year (e.g., 2009–2010 is the school year running from the fall of 2009 through the spring of 2010).

² We use the word *site* to describe any of the three school districts or four charter management organizations that received funding from the foundation to implement the IP initiative.

³ We also prepared a series of internal reports to the foundation and the sites.

potential benefits and challenges of adopting new teacher-evaluation systems and associated strategic human-relations policies.

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Established in 1946, AIR is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research on important social issues and delivers technical assistance, both domestically and internationally, in the areas of education, health, and workforce productivity.

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Introduction

The RAND Corporation/American Institutes for Research report *Improving Teaching Effectiveness: Final Report—The Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching Through 2015–2016* was published in June 2018.⁴ In the months following publication, the evaluation team obtained some new information on resources invested in the charter management organizations (CMOs) participating in the Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching (IP) initiative. The CMOs were Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, Aspire Public Schools, Green Dot Public Schools, and Partnerships to Uplift Communities (PUC) Schools.⁵

As explained in the report, the CMOs were organized at the outset of the initiative as a consortium called the College-Ready Promise (TCRP), which was the direct IP grantee from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years.⁶ In 2011, the consortium arrangement was restructured, and each of the four still-participating CMOs received its own grant from the foundation. The central TCRP office—known as the hub—continued to play a role facilitating the CMOs’ implementation of the initiative, although this role declined over time.

The new information we obtained indicates that some funding that the foundation provided to the hub for in-kind support of the four CMOs was inadvertently left out of the resource analysis presented in the report. The report also left out some funding that TCRP received from other sources. This addendum complements the resource results in the report, taking this new information into account. It pertains primarily to Chapter Nine but also affects some statements in the summary of the report.⁷

⁴ Brian M. Stecher, Deborah J. Holtzman, Michael S. Garet, Laura S. Hamilton, John Engberg, Elizabeth D. Steiner, Abby Robyn, Matthew D. Baird, Italo A. Gutierrez, Evan D. Peet, Iliana Brodziak de los Reyes, Kaitlin Fronberg, Gabriel Weinberger, Gerald Paul Hunter, and Jay Chambers, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2242-BMGF, 2018. As of January 3, 2019: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2242.html

⁵ Originally, there were five CMOs, but the Inner City Education Foundation (ICEF) Public Schools did not participate after 2010–2011.

⁶ Stecher et al., 2018, in footnote 1 on p. 4 and in greater depth on p. 41.

⁷ The summary is Stecher et al., 2018, pp. xxv–l.

The Main Report's Discussion of Resources Invested in the IP Initiative

In Chapter Nine of the report, we showed TCRP funding as the source for approximately \$6.1 million of total IP expenditures in fiscal years 2010 and 2011.⁸ The report did not indicate the source for these TCRP funds, but the newly available information indicates that the \$6.1 million came from the Gates Foundation. In addition, we learned that the foundation provided another \$18.3 million to the hub from 2009 to 2016.⁹ Thus, the foundation provided a total of about \$24.4 million to the hub. We also learned that, in addition to the matching funds received by the individual CMOs,¹⁰ TCRP received \$3.8 million from various federal and other grants that was applied to the initiative. Therefore, the resources that the hub received for the support of the initiative totaled \$28.2 million. The report shows only \$6.1 million, meaning that we inadvertently omitted \$22.2 million.¹¹

Particularly after fiscal year 2011, most of the funds that the hub received were not passed through to the individual CMOs as direct funding. Rather, they were spent on equipment and services to support the work of the CMOs collectively. These in-kind contributions focused particularly on the development and implementation of new CMO data management systems for student records and teacher data, which, before the initiative, had often been stored and maintained at the school level, rather than at the CMO level. In addition, TCRP staff arranged for professional development and support for the CMOs to implement TCRP's teacher observation rubric, as well as convenings for school leaders focused on improving teaching effectiveness.

Because most of the services that the hub provided to the CMOs were contributed in kind, there is no direct way to allocate the costs of the activities to the individual CMOs. We considered dividing them among the CMOs in proportion to the rest of each CMO's spending, as we had done with the \$6.1 million of which we had been aware.¹² But we concluded that the resulting approximations would be less solid than the other amounts shown in the chapter, which are based on detailed financial records.¹³

⁸ Stecher et al., 2018, p. 342, Figure 9.1.

⁹ The \$24.4 million total excludes an additional \$697,500 that was spent for a fifth CMO, ICEF Public Schools, before it dropped out of the initiative.

¹⁰ As shown in Stecher et al., 2018, p. 342, Figure 9.1.

¹¹ When we account for rounding, we see that \$18.3 million + \$3.8 million = \$22.2 million.

¹² As shown in Stecher et al., 2018, p. 342, Figure 9.1.

¹³ In particular, we were informed that the CMOs that received more funds directly from the foundation might have received fewer services indirectly through the hub, suggesting that allocating the cost of the in-kind services in proportion to the rest of each CMO's spending would be inaccurate.

Thus, rather than updating our estimates of spending by the four CMOs separately, we discuss the effects that the additional TCRP funds had on total spending across the four CMOs. The organization of the following discussion parallels the organization of Chapter Nine.

Total Spending on the IP Initiative

When the total includes the additional \$24.4 million in hub expenditures, Gates Foundation spending on the IP initiative for the period covered by the report comes to approximately \$236.5 million. The report showed \$212 million in Gates Foundation expenditures when rounded or \$212.1 million unrounded.¹⁴

Overall expenditures on the IP initiative, from all sources, including the Gates Foundation, totaled about \$596.9 million (versus \$574.7 million in the report).¹⁵ Thus, Gates Foundation funds accounted for about 40 percent of the spending on the initiative (37 percent cited in the report).

Total expenditures by the four CMOs plus the hub were about \$90 million (\$67.8 million cited in the report). Of this, the Gates Foundation provided about \$26.3 million directly to the CMOs (29 percent) and \$24.4 million indirectly through the hub (27 percent). (The percentages cited in the report ranged from 28 percent in Aspire to 53 percent in Green Dot.)

As reported in Figure 9.1 in Stecher et al., 2018, the estimated per-pupil spending over the course of the initiative (2009–2016) was \$1,328 for Alliance, \$2,416 for Aspire, \$868 for Green Dot, and \$1,539 for PUC. When we include the full cost of TCRP activities (reflecting the additional \$18.3 million in foundation funds and \$3.8 million in matching funds), the per-pupil spending increases by about \$523, on average, for each of the four CMOs.

Proportion of Sites' Total Budgets Spent on the IP Initiative in 2015–2016

Table 9.3 in Stecher et al., 2018, showed that the four CMOs spent \$19.9 million on the initiative in 2015–2016, or about 3.8 percent of the overall budget of \$522.6 million across the four CMOs. The additional TCRP spending (including both Gates Foundation and matching funds) was approximately \$256,000 in 2015–2016—less than 0.05 percent of the sum of the four CMOs' overall budgets. Thus, the addition of the hub funds has little appreciable effect on the results shown in Table 9.3.

¹⁴ For rounded data, see Stecher et al., 2018, pp. 333, 343. In addition, the foundation spent another \$13 million or so in Shelby County after the period covered in the report, bringing the total Gates Foundation spending on the IP initiative to \$249.5 million.

¹⁵ The \$574.7 million figure is as cited in Stecher et al., 2018, p. 341. As explained elsewhere, the \$22.2 million increase consists of the additional \$18.3 million from the Gates Foundation to TCRP and the \$3.8 million in matching funds obtained by TCRP.

Change over Time in Funding and Funding Source

According to the newly obtained information, almost half of the funds that the Gates Foundation provided to the hub came in the first two years (2009–2010 and 2010–2011), and three-quarters of the funding came in the first three years.

In total, Gates Foundation grants to the hub were equivalent to about \$189 per student (across the four CMOs) in 2009–2010, \$90 per CMO student in 2010–2011, and \$176 per CMO student in 2011–2012.¹⁶ Per-pupil amounts dropped to \$35, \$34, \$44, and \$5 in 2012–2013, 2013–2014, 2014–2015, and 2015–2016, respectively. If we sum across years, the foundation investment made through the hub totaled \$573 per student.¹⁷

The declining Gates Foundation investment in the hub is consistent with the conclusion in the report that the share of expenditures covered by the Gates Foundation declined over time.¹⁸

Spending by Implementation Lever

In the report, we provided an analysis of expenditures, by lever, for 2009 through 2016, based on an analysis of district and CMO financial records.¹⁹ Overall, the data management work that the hub supported probably supported all of the levers (teacher evaluation, professional development, staffing, and compensation and career ladders), but we lack information on the extent to which each CMO used the in-kind support for each lever.

Comprehensive Cost of Operating the Teacher-Evaluation System in 2014–2015

For the report, we estimated the comprehensive cost of operating the teacher-evaluation system in 2014–2015, including direct expenditures and the time that teachers and leaders devoted to evaluation activities. As presented in the report, the comprehensive costs ranged across the four CMOs from \$228 per pupil in Green Dot to \$327 per pupil in Alliance.²⁰ The newly discovered hub expenditures in 2014–2015 added approximately \$52 per pupil (including \$44 per pupil from the Gates Foundation and \$8 per pupil in matching funds). As described elsewhere, we lack specific information on the proportion of this amount allocated to the teacher-evaluation lever. If we assume that half of the hub expenditures were related to teacher

¹⁶ These amounts do not include the \$697,500 spent on ICEF Public Schools in 2009–2010 and 2010–2011.

¹⁷ As noted earlier, the inclusion of the newly recognized hub funding (\$18.3 million in foundation funds and \$3.8 million in matching funds) increases the per-pupil spending for students in the CMOs by about \$523 over what we initially reported. The \$573 per pupil cited here reflects the foundation's investment made through the hub. It excludes the matching funds, but it includes the \$6.1 million shown in the report but not attributed to the foundation.

¹⁸ Stecher et al., 2018, p. 347.

¹⁹ Stecher et al., 2018, pp. 350–353.

²⁰ Stecher et al., 2018, p. 363, Figure 9.9.

evaluation, we calculate that the comprehensive cost would be about \$26 per pupil higher than the values included in the report.

The Report Summary's Discussion of Resources Invested in the IP Initiative

The new information on expenditures has the following implications for the discussion of resources in the summary:²¹

- When we include the additional expenditures, we find that spending on the reforms across the seven sites totaled \$597 million (versus \$575 cited in the summary).
- The additional expenditures add \$523, on average, for each of the four CMOs, to the per-pupil amounts cited in the summary.
- As discussed earlier, TCRP in-kind support in the 2015–2016 year totaled approximately \$256,000, which is less than 0.05 percent of total CMO spending that year.²² Including this in-kind support thus has little appreciable effect on estimates of the percentage of total site budgets devoted to the initiative in 2015–2016. When we take the hub support into account, expenditures as a percentage of the total site budget remain as cited in the summary, ranging from 1.7 percent in Green Dot to 6.6 percent in Aspire.
- As indicated earlier, we lack information on the extent to which each CMO focused the in-kind support from TCRP on each specific lever; thus, we cannot update the by-lever expenditure percentages presented in the summary.
- The largest source of funding for the initiative was the Gates Foundation, which awarded approximately \$236.5 million across the seven sites (\$212 million cited in the summary).
- Overall, including hub funds, the foundation funded about 56 percent of total CMO expenditures on the initiative: 29 percent directly to the CMOs and 27 percent indirectly through the hub. (The percentages cited in the report without the in-kind support from the hub ranged from 28 percent in Aspire to 53 percent in Green Dot.)
- The summary reports the per-pupil cost of evaluation activities combining direct expenditures and the cost of teacher and principal time. We lack specific information on the proportion of hub expenditures allotted to the teacher-evaluation lever. If we assume that half of these expenditures were related to teacher evaluation, the comprehensive cost for the CMOs would be about \$26 per pupil higher than the \$280 per-pupil average value cited in the summary.

²¹ Stecher et al., 2018, p. xxxv.

²² Because our expenditure analyses included summer activities, these ranges in this report are not necessarily school years but time frames.