

# RESEARCH REPORT



Graduate School of Education

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## **A Time Use Study of Site Support Personnel in New York City's UPK Program: Final Report to the Foundation for Child Development**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## **About NIEER**

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, conducts and disseminates independent research and analysis to inform early childhood education policy.

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## Study Purposes

If early childhood educators are to provide the types of high quality learning experiences for young children that ensure positive developmental outcomes, then they need ongoing opportunities to hone their pedagogical knowledge and skills. Professional learning for early childhood educators can take many forms (e.g. off-site workshops, continuing education credit at universities, professional learning communities) but increasingly systems leaders are employing individuals in various kinds of technical assistance and consultation roles. Individuals in these roles are often the conduit between policy and practice, supporting teaching teams and team leaders to address problems of practice that directly and indirectly have an impact on young children and their families.

One of the most widely employed site assistance roles is that of coaches, a teacher-leadership role (Mangin, 2014) that involves a collaborative partnership between early childhood professionals (Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004), the aim of which is to improve early childhood educators' "learning and application of child-specific interventions or teaching strategies" (Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, & Knoche, 2009, p. 382). Working one-on-one or with small groups of educators in local sites of practice, coaches in public preschool programs support teachers to use evidence-based practices and to implement curricula and pedagogical approaches in keeping with state or city guidelines (McLeod, Hardy, & Grifenhagen, 2019).

Aside from instructional coaches there are also personnel who provide technical assistance and support in specialized areas. Some of these personnel, may focus on issues of compliance and policy such as licensing and standards. Others may center their work around particular areas or users of early childhood services such as those who work with families and children with developmental needs or in mental health services. Regardless of the role of these infrastructure personnel as they have been called collectively (Ryan & Whitebook, 2012), their task is to support program staff to improve the quality of their practices in some way.

Much of the research on the early childhood workforce (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2015) investigates early childhood teachers and leaders and not those who work in support and technical assistance roles across a range of programs or sites. The research that does exist concentrates mostly on different forms of instructional coaching as part of content focused interventions (e.g. Brenneman, Lange, & Nayfield, 2019; Brock & Beaman-Diglia, 2018; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). Policymakers and leaders of pre-K systems therefore, have little empirical information to guide how they structure the range of technical assistance and support they provide to pre-kindergarten programs.

This study sought to understand the work of a range of site support roles in New York City's (NYC) universal pre-kindergarten (pre-K) program. Employing time use methodology, the main research question guiding this study was how do a group of NYC pre-K site support personnel use their time? We also sought to answer the sub-questions: what are the common activities site support personnel spend their time doing and for how long? and how do activities and time use vary across the demographics and roles of site support personnel?

## **Background to the Study**

Every 4-year-old child residing in NYC is eligible for full day pre-kindergarten. The city began providing full day, quality pre-K to 4-year-olds in 2014 although it was not until 2015-16 that pre-K was universally available to all 4-year-olds in the city. In 2017, 3-K for All was initiated for eligible 3-year-olds beginning with 2 districts and has been expanding to new districts each year since. Pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds is delivered through a mixed service delivery system with children attending pre-K in public schools including purposefully built early education centers, as well as charter schools, child care centers, and Head Start programs.

Data collection for this study was conducted across 2017-2018 therefore it is important to provide some sense of the pre-K technical assistance landscape in NYC during this study and how it has evolved over the course of 3 years. This description was created by engaging in conversation with key agency leaders in 2017 and 2020.

### **Pre-K Coaching Model in 2017-2018**

Because pre-K was and continues to operate in a number of auspices, site support staff at the time of the study were located across several agencies. The largest number worked for the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) who hired both instructional coordinators and social workers to provide teaching staff and site leaders with direct support. When we interviewed Sophia Pappas in 2017, then Chief Executive Officer for the Division of Early Childhood Education, there were 100 instructional coordinators and 125 social workers who formed the pre-K for all site support team and provided support to 1,800 sites. Instructional coordinators tended to focus on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment while social workers according to Ms. Pappas focused on “building the capacity of the program to support high quality family engagement, social emotional learning, and behavioral support.” According to Jill Resnick the Family and Community Engagement team Executive Director (which has since been renamed the Mental Health and Wellness team) at the time of the study, social workers “mostly coach and consult on the family engagement standards, building strong relationships with families, and two way communication. They are observing and modeling and making suggestions and sharing resources.” Dosage and who was assigned to a site was determined through examination of quality data and knowledge of sites. Although the social workers and instructional coordinators had specific foci, in Ms. Pappas’ words, “all of these people are doing coaching at the site level with teaching teams and leaders to improve quality.”

In addition to the on-site support provided by instructional coordinators and social workers, professional development of teaching teams and leaders also occurred through 4 different professional learning tracks or a series of professional learning opportunities, each of which focused and continue to focus on different aspects of the quality standards. These tracks are: NYC Pre-K Create that seeks to support team leaders and teaching teams to incorporate the arts and help children express themselves through a range of modalities, NYC Pre-K Explore which focuses on implementing the Building Blocks curriculum and the Pre-K Units of Study to develop children’s critical thinking and problem solving skills, NYC Pre-K Thrive that seeks to elevate teachers’ and leaders’ family engagement strategies and approaches to supporting children’s social and emotional development and NYC Pre-K Inspire (now referred to as Teaching Team Learning Communities), that aims to help

teachers and leaders incorporate rigorous and developmentally appropriate instruction and family engagement practices aligned to state common core standards and the pre-K quality program standards. Facilitating some of these professional learning tracks also comprised the work of some of the NYCDOE coaches. Sabrina Silverstein, the then Executive Director of the Teaching and Learning Team at the NYCDOE informed us that, “Inspire which is the largest of our tracks, our instructional coordinators deliver the professional learning.” Similarly, the social workers were involved in facilitating workshops in the NYC Pre-K Thrive professional learning track.

At the same time facilitation of some professional learning tracks was contracted out to outside groups. For example, the NYCDOE partnered with Bank Street College of Education to provide workshops and coaching in its Pre-K Explore professional learning track. Bank Street Explore coaches supported program teams to learn and implement the Building Blocks math curriculum and Pre-K for All Interdisciplinary Units of Study. Explore coaches therefore facilitated workshops and provided on-site coaching to program teams in these specific curricula. In the words of Sabrina Silverstein, “the Bank Street coaches are Building Blocks experts... and go out approximately once a month and support the teaching team and leader in the site to ensure fidelity to the curriculum and to observe and give feedback.” Depending on which professional learning track a site was assigned to therefore, it might be possible for them to receive coaching from instructional coordinators, social workers and Bank Street coaches.

Given that pre-kindergarten was also operating in center based child care settings and Head Start settings, the Administration for Children Services (ACS) also had a group of team leaders and program specialists whose role was to support primarily program directors in meeting quality standards. The research team viewed these roles as a different form of technical assistance and consultation to that of instructional coordinators, social workers and Explore coaches in that the ACS team leaders and program specialists were not assigned pre-K sites directly. Instead they coached child care directors and Head Start leaders who also might have pre-K classrooms but also might be serving infants and toddlers and they also worked with family child care sites. At the time of the study, there were 7 team leaders and 23 program specialists.

Team leaders, in the words of Denise, one of the leaders we spoke with, “manage a caseload of assigned day care centers. We also manage the specialists that go out to those programs and we provide technical assistance and guidance to the programs as needed.” Marjorie, another team leader added, “we do a lot of program management in terms of ensuring that the program is to be relicensed every two years. Then we have a caseload of cycles of visits that we make, either monitoring the program or providing technical assistance to the program that are specific to different content areas.”

Program specialists tended to do more interfacing with sites directly. Liz, one of the program specialists reported that, “we’re here to support programs in all areas of quality, ensuring that standards are upheld to provide services to children and families.” These visits were structured through the use of a protocol and on each visit the program specialists met with site leaders to ensure they were meeting the standards in a particular area (e.g. governance). At the same time, the program specialists viewed their role as not only monitoring but providing support for program staff. As Liz told us, “We try to build relationships. We know what the challenges are so we may have a protocol but “let’s talk.”

Thus the site support provided to pre-K programs when we first began this study spanned across two city agencies and encompassed several roles. At the heart of all these different roles was ensuring the quality of programming for young children through the provision of technical assistance.

## **Pre-K Coaching Model in 2020**

This site support landscape changed beginning in the fall of 2017 when it was announced that the teams from ACS and DOE would be merged within the Division of Early Childhood in the NYC Department of Education and that 300 Early Learn programs originally under the oversight of ACS would be moved to the NYCDOE. This shift in organizational structure along with the continuing expansion of 3K for All, has led to some changes in the number of site support personnel, and their roles and responsibilities although they still have similar titles.

In 2020, there are 3 different technical assistance or site support teams that work together in various pre-K sites, all with a focus on supporting teaching teams and leaders to provide high quality instruction and support to young children and their families. The first of these are the instructional coordinators of which there are now 167. The case load of instructional coordinators is determined based on review of various classroom quality assessment data as well as input from instructional coordinators about the perceived need of specific pre-K programs. Some of the 167 instructional coordinators have sub-specialties. For example, the facilitation of the Explore professional learning track is slowly moving away from Bank Street to be housed within the Division of Early Childhood and 10 of the instructional coordinators are Explore coaches. There are now 100 official dual language pre-K programs and coaches who have a background in this area are assigned to these sites.

The second group of site support personnel are the 175 social workers who are moving away from direct service support to provide mental health consultation using the Georgetown Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation model. Therefore while there is some direct assistance to teaching teams to help them engage families and respond effectively to particular children, the aim of the model is to scaffold teachers to build their skill set to do this work. Similar to the instructional coordinators, the case load of social workers is determined by examination of assessment data and input from social workers themselves but poverty data is also used to prioritize these assignments.

Finally, there is the policy support team comprised of policy support managers and policy support specialists whose main focus is supporting programs in improving areas of foundational quality such as health and safety, staffing qualifications, and child health and nutrition. The 7 policy support managers are responsible for supervising the policy support specialists in their work providing technical assistance to team leaders. Most of the policy support managers were team leaders at ACS and so have deep relationships with programs, and they along with the policy support specialists are often the “go-to” people for team leaders in contracted sites. The 35 policy support specialists provide direct technical assistance to a group of programs using the DECE Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ), the DECE Policy Handbook, and applicable local, state, and federal regulations, monitoring and supporting programs to meet quality indicators.

While, it may appear each of these roles are distinct in their focus – instructional coordinators on curriculum and instruction, social workers on mental health and family engagement, and the policy support team on foundational quality support and monitoring-- the 3 technical assistance and site support roles work together as pods of support. Every effort is made to intentionally align caseloads so that as much as possible the same instructional coordinator, social worker, and policy support specialist share the same sites. Moreover, all pods use the site support portal, an online platform on which they record their interactions with sites so that each site support team member of the pod working with a program has a clear sense of the kinds of interactions and action plans that have taken place at a particular program. In this way, it is hoped that communications and interactions with contracted programs providing pre-K are both consistent and maximized.

## **Methodology**

Time use or time diary methods are a methodology that has been employed in the social sciences for a number of decades (Harrison, Wong, Press, Gibson & Ryan, 2019) as they allow for the capture of the activities and tasks of everyday life in context but also in quantifiable ways (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003). As we were interested in the activities site support staff engaged in and how much of the work day was given to particular activities or work tasks, time diaries were a good fit for our research purposes.

## **Sample**

From the population of approximately 260 site support staff, 56 were recruited for the study in several phases. First, each agency leader sent out an email explaining the study with contact information should they wish to participate. Members of the research team also attended various agency meetings to inform instructional coordinators and social workers, about the study in an effort to recruit participants. Finally, a meeting was held with site support staff of the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) in an effort to recruit more program specialists and team leaders for the study. Of the 56 recruited participants, 7 did not respond to repeated efforts to set up a time and date for the first interview. Therefore a total of 49 site support staff across 3 different agencies comprised the sample for this study.

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the sample. Forty were social workers or instructional coordinators employed directly by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), 3 were Explore coaches with Bank Street College of Education, and 6 were employed (2 team leaders & 4 program specialists) in the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). The majority of participants were white and female. Sixty one percent of the sample had some form of preschool certification. As required by their job description, all of the instructional coordinators were certified teachers as were most of those working in ACS. Just over half of the site support staff had worked in classrooms serving children under 5 years of age. The majority of instructional coaches were experienced pre-K teachers, as were most of the ACS and Explore coaches. Social workers, because of their focus and expertise are not expected to have teaching certification or experience. Instead social workers are required to have master's degrees, be licensed, and have experience working in school settings.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

	Sample Characteristics		
		Mean	SD
Age		46 years	10 years
Years PreK site support role		5 years	5 years
		Count	%
Ethnicity	White/Non-Hispanic	30	62.5%
	African American	9	18.8%
	Hispanic/Latinx	8	16.7%
	Other	1	2.1%
Highest education attainment	Masters or above	49	100%
Teaching certification NYC	Yes	30	61.2%
	No	19	38.8%
PreK teaching experience	Yes	28	57.1%
	No	21	42.9%
Role	Instructional coordinator	25	51.0%
	Social worker	15	30.6%
	Program Specialist	4	8.2%
	Team Leader	2	4.1%
	Explore coach	3	6.1%

## Date Collection

Retrospective time use diaries were collected at 3 time points across the year. Participants were contacted to set up a time for the first interview which occurred the day after a workday. Over the telephone participants were asked “Let’s begin with 24 hours ago, what were you doing?” For all work-related activities, interviewees were asked to describe the start and end time, the context (e.g. classroom, director’s office), the nature of the work (observing, meeting with director etc.), and who was involved. These activities and contextual details were recorded by the trained interviewer on a template (see Appendix A).

This same procedure was followed for all 3 interviews with the only variation being that in the first interview participants also answered some demographic questions. In an effort to try and capture whether work activities varied by day or time of year, the second and 3rd interviews were arranged several months apart and on different days (i.e. if the 1st interview captured a Tuesday of work, the next interview was scheduled for any other work day).

## Data Analysis

Data analysis of the time diaries was both inductive and deductive. First, we employed the coding scheme from one of the few available time use studies of early childhood instructional coaches (Ryan, Frede, & Hornbeck, 2004). Research team members then read the same 3 time diary interviews using both the deductive categories and coding inductively where activities did not fit the predetermined coding scheme. The research team then met to come up with the final coding scheme (see Table 2) which included 5 general categories and 23 subcodes. Two research assistants were trained up in the coding scheme by having to

apply the codes to several interviews and checking their coding with the principal investigator. The data set of 147 time diaries were then coded by the research assistants for key activities and time spent on each activity across the 24 hours of each interview. Finally, coded time diary data were transferred into SPSS ready for the next stage of analysis.

Descriptive analyses were conducted for all time use codes across all time points so that it was possible to identify how much time was spent by site support personnel on particular activities. To identify whether time use in particular work-related tasks varied by time or day of year we ran repeated measures tests for each aggregated category (e.g. technical assistance, agency related work etc.). Linear regressions were conducted to examine which factors were associated with time use (e.g. coach experience, qualifications, agency etc.).

*Table 2. Time Use Codes*

Code	Sub-codes/Activity
Technical Assistance	Direct classroom assistance In-classroom observation Meetings with teachers Meetings with administrators Meetings with parents Meetings with other personnel on-site Rapport building Covering a class Paperwork Site visit planning
Professional Development	Workshop preparation Leading workshops
Agency-related Work	Job guidance – policy Enrollment Supervision Agency paperwork
Leadership Activities	Attending training Collaborating with colleagues
Other	Commute Travel Travel and work Breaks Transitions and monitoring

## Findings

The findings presented below are organized by research question. Where possible we also include some data collected from the interviews to illustrate the activities of coaches working in different roles.

### **How do a group of NYC UPK site support staff use their time and what are the common activities they spend their time doing and for how long?**

Coding of the time diaries revealed that there were no significant differences across the 3 time points in how site support staff spent their time. At the first time point, site support staff spent a total of 568 minutes or 9 and half hours involved in work-related activities including commuting to and from work while at time point 3 they spent 589 minutes (see Figure 1).

In general, site support personnel spent their time in 5 major activities: 1) technical assistance or preparing and providing direct assistance to sites and educators and leaders within those sites, 2) developing and delivering professional development, 3) agency related work such as meetings with supervisors, paperwork like coaching logs etc. 4) leadership that involved participating in some professional development or working with colleagues and 5) other activities such as commuting and travel to and between sites as well as personal time.

Consider the following description of a 24-hour time period for Kathryn, an instructional coordinator (see Table 3).

*Table 3. Time Use of an Instructional Coordinator*

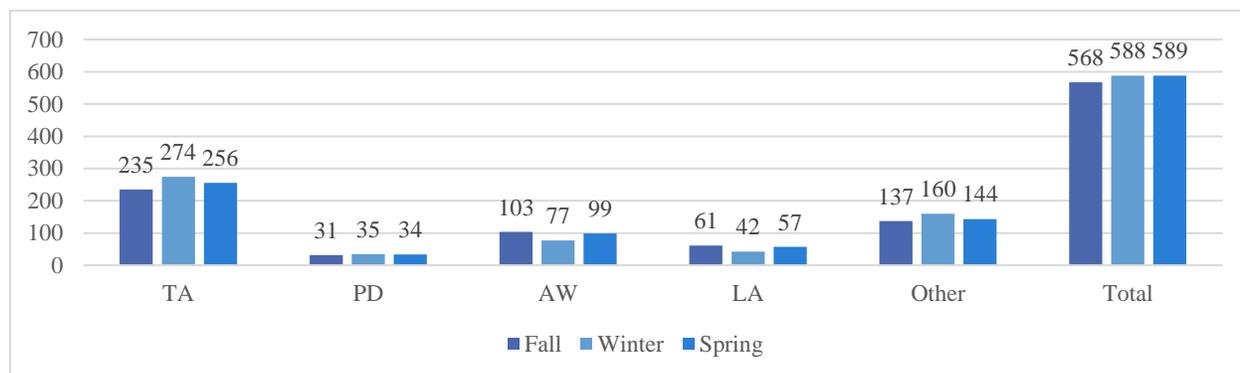
Start Time	End Time	Activity
1:00pm	1:30pm	In the office on a phone call with a teacher I will be visiting the next day. Discussed plans for the day, checking in what materials I might need to bring.
1:30pm	2:00pm	Completed a log for that morning's coaching visit
2:00pm	3:00pm	Finished a follow-up letter to a site, printed it, filed it and entered it on tracking sheet. Started working on another follow-up letter
3:00pm	3:15pm	Met with supervisor to check in.
3:15pm	3:30pm	Prepared for next day's visit, made sure I had agenda and note taking forms
3:30pm	4:00pm	Continued to work on follow up letter I had started earlier
4:00pm	4:50pm	Drove home. Called colleague, discussed meeting with supervisor and went over colleague's next day to work out kinks.
4:50pm	5:00pm	At home checked and replied to work email
5:00pm	6:35am	Personal time at home
6:35am	6:45am	Texted colleague about work-related activity
6:45am	7:45am	Drove to first site
7:45am	8:00am	Parked quickly, texted and spoke with mentee in car and while walking to the site.
8:00am	8:30am	Went right to the classroom. Chatted with teacher, went over agenda, challenges, successes, what she would be doing today. Suggested that a bulletin board could be changed to include meaningful student work.
8:30am	9:05am	Teacher got the students. I greeted them as they arrived. Teacher had morning meeting. I observed and took notes. Helped the assistant teacher to work on the bulletin board.
9:05am	9:25am	Teacher did read aloud. I observed, wrote notes. I encouraged/modeled open-ended conversation with children to make things relatable.
9:25am	9:30am	Teacher introduced a follow up activity. I observed.

9:30am	10:00am	Students went to centers, small groups worked with teacher on a follow up activity. I observed and thought about how the teacher could change the activity. Discussed purpose of activity with teacher throughout.
10:00am	10:05am	Spoke with teacher to follow up about activity, discussed and debriefed changes and purpose of activity.
10:05am	10:30am	Spoke with teacher, planned for next steps as students are at centers. Interacted with children while talking with teacher.
10:30am	11:00am	Walked to car, checked email. As drove to office I talked with colleague on the phone about my visit.
11:00am	11:10am	Walked to office from car.
11:10am	12:00pm	Got settled working on coaching log from this morning's visit.
12:00pm	12:30pm	Finishing up follow-up letter from yesterday's visit.
12:30pm	12:47pm	Ran out to get lunch.
12:47pm	1:00pm	Worked on follow-up letter from today's visit while eating.

As can be seen in this 24-hour time diary, Kathryn spent the first 3 hours engaged in some agency-related work including completing some coaching logs and meeting with her supervisor. While she was in the office, she also completed some technical assistance work, in preparation for her site visit the following day. On her way home from work that day she spoke with a colleague (leadership activity) and then engaged in some “other” or personal activities. The following morning some time was spent commuting to a pre-K site (other). Once at the site, Kathryn engages in a number of “technical assistance” activities including observing the teacher in action, meeting with the teacher sharing her observations and strategizing on ways she can incorporate more open ended conversation and other things she may have observed and providing direct classroom assistance (helping with the bulletin board and interacting with children during center time). After leaving the site and commuting to the office, Kathryn then talks with a colleague (leadership activity) and completes agency paperwork.

By far the majority of time for site support personnel was spent on providing technical assistance to programs (see Figure 1). This time ranged from a mean of 235 minutes at time point 1 to a mean of 256 minutes at time point 3. After taking out personal activities, the next major activity was that of other (ranging from 137 minutes at time point 1 to 144 minutes at time point 3) such as travelling between programs. Across all 3 time points, site support personnel spent a total of 279 minutes (ranging from 103 minutes to 79 minutes) on agency-related work and often told us that they completed their paperwork, while on the subway travelling between sites or commuting to and from their homes. When we interviewed site support staff they were less likely to participate in leadership or professional development activities for themselves spending an average of 53 minutes per time point. Finally, the least amount of time was spent planning and delivering professional development to educators (around 30 minutes at each time point).

Figure 1. Average time in each aggregated category by time point



In keeping with their job roles then, the site support personnel in this study spent most of their time working with teaching teams and site leaders whether it be talking about family engagement, how to implement specific pedagogies and curricula approaches or meeting quality standards.

### How do Activities and Time Use Vary by Characteristics of Site Support Staff?

Some characteristics were found to be related to the time use of site support personnel. Not surprisingly, how participants spent their time was found to be related to their particular site support role.

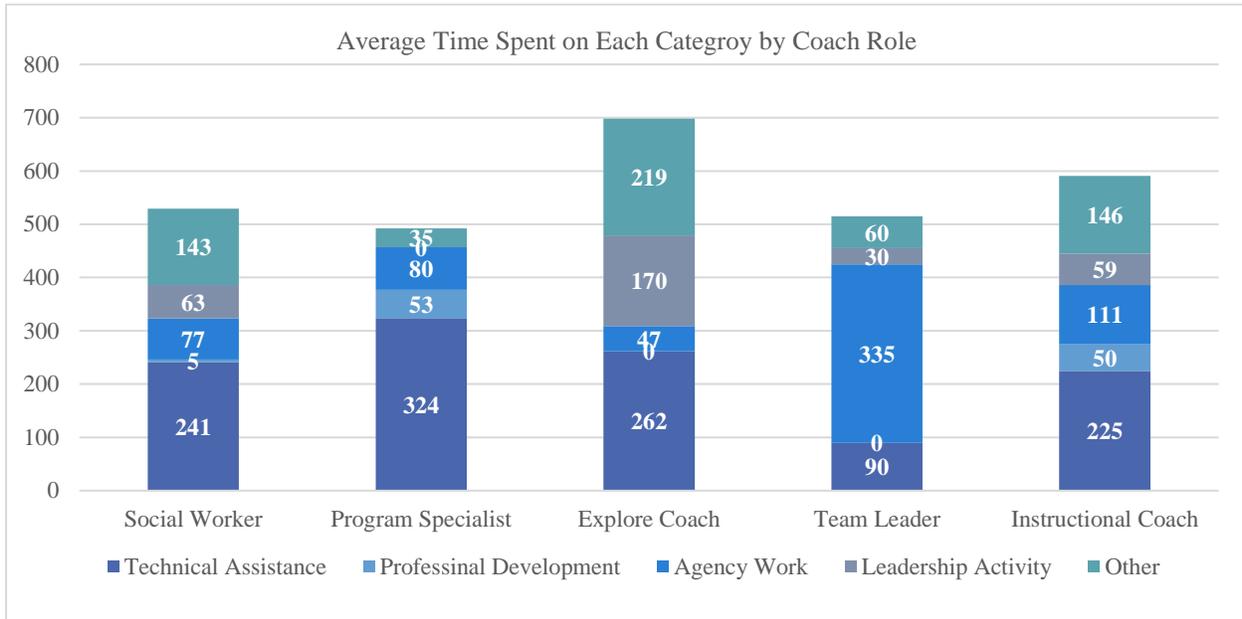
#### Role and Time Use

As shown in Figure 2, program specialists, social workers, Explore coaches, and instructional coordinators spent the majority of time on technical assistance activities. Average amount of time on technical assistance for these individuals ranged from 225 minutes for instructional coordinators across the 3 time points to 324 minutes for program specialists. Team leaders spent an average of 90 minutes on the provision of technical assistance.

Alternatively, agency related work comprised the majority of time use of team leaders who spent an average of 335 minutes on this work. Instructional coordinators spent an average of 111 minutes on agency work across the 3 time points. The other site support roles spent much less time on agency related work ranging from 77 minutes on average for social workers to 47 minutes for Explore coaches.

As can also be seen in Figure 2, professional development or the preparation of, and delivery of training experiences to pre-K teams comprised a small proportion of the work of site support staff with program specialists and instructional coordinators spending between an average of 50 and 53 minutes on this type of work. Leadership activities such as meeting with colleagues and/or attending professional development to improve the knowledge and expertise of site support staff themselves was limited across roles. Explore coaches spent the most time in this kind of work (170 minutes), whereas program specialists did not participate in any leadership activity over the time points when we interviewed them.

Figure 2. Time Use by Activity by Role



While technical assistance comprised the majority of work of Explore coaches, social workers, instructional coordinators and program specialists, this work looked slightly different. Consider social worker Maqueda’s day in January 2018 displayed in Table 4. Most of Maqueda’s work this day involved providing technical assistance at 2 different sites but in keeping with the focus of her role, much of this technical assistance concentrated on working with families and helping teachers with resources and strategies to support young children’s behavior and development (see Table 4). As seen in instructional coordinator Kathryn’s log above (see Table 3), her interactions with teaching teams were more about curriculum and instruction.

Table 4. Time Use of a Social Worker

Start Time	End Time	Activity
1:00pm	1:06pm	In a classroom sitting and talking with a student
1:06pm	1:20pm	Director came in and we moved to her office to discuss the specific student, concerns with student’s health issues, next steps for student, and maybe whether ACS might be able to help.
1:20pm	1:27pm	Went to get notebook from the family room, ran into instructional coordinator. We spoke for 5 minutes about her impressions of the site as it is a new site for her. Also shared resources with family worker who stopped in.
1:27pm	1:37pm	Went into the next classroom, students were having naptime, spoke with the teacher about a student.
1:37pm	1:50pm	Intervened during naptime, modeled expectations of students during naptime.
1:50pm	2:00pm	Naptime was over. Helped students get shoes. Introduced myself to class.
2:00pm	3:23pm	Observed specific students seeing where interventions would be helpful, modeling and intervening as no limits were being set. Teacher began to read a book to the class- observed and helped with students who were having difficulty listening.
3:23pm	3:33pm	Students began to line up to go to another classroom so left and went back to family room. Ran into another instructional coordinator and spoke to her about how things were going, what I had observed then we discussed another site we share.
3:33pm	3:43pm	Said goodbye to site director, left site, walked to subway.
3:43pm	3:50pm	Waiting for subway.

3:50pm	4:30pm	Rode subway. Checked email for 2-3 minutes.
4:30pm	7:40am	Personal time.
7:40am	7:55am	Got right on bus.
7:55am	8:00am	Walked to site from bust stop
8:00am	8:20am	Walked into site, waited to meet with site principal. Checked email and reviewed resources while waiting.
8:20am	8:25am	Met with principal in the conference room to discuss what we would be going over during a meeting with a parent.
8:25am	8:40am	Went to classroom of student they would be meeting about later. Teacher was having morning meeting. Observed specific student during morning meeting.
8:40am	8:50am	Parent came in and sat with her child. Assistant teacher took over the group. Moved with teacher to hallway to speak with her about the meeting we would be having with the parent.
8:50am	9:20am	In conference room with parent, teacher and director. Spoke about student's great progress, praising what parent had been doing. Discussed services for student.
9:20am	11:30am	Went to a classroom, principal asked me to visit. Sat with some students, engaged, observed, modeled conflict resolution vocabulary. Spoke with teacher during gross motor about a student who had a meltdown prior day and next steps to support that student.
11:30am	11:40am	Went to another classroom, put things down. Stepped out to hallway to think about what resources to share with the teacher.
11:40am	12:00pm	Went back into classroom and spoke to teacher about resources she can use, resources for parents at home and how to speak with parents.
12:00pm	12:05pm	Went back to the first classroom I observed in, spoke about problem solving and using positive and effective commands.
12:05pm	12:15pm	Checked back in with another teacher, spoke about a new student.
12:15pm	12:30pm	Went to teacher closet area, ate lunch, chatted with floater teacher who stopped by.
12:30pm	1:00pm	Used bathroom, wrote notes, said good bye to teachers.

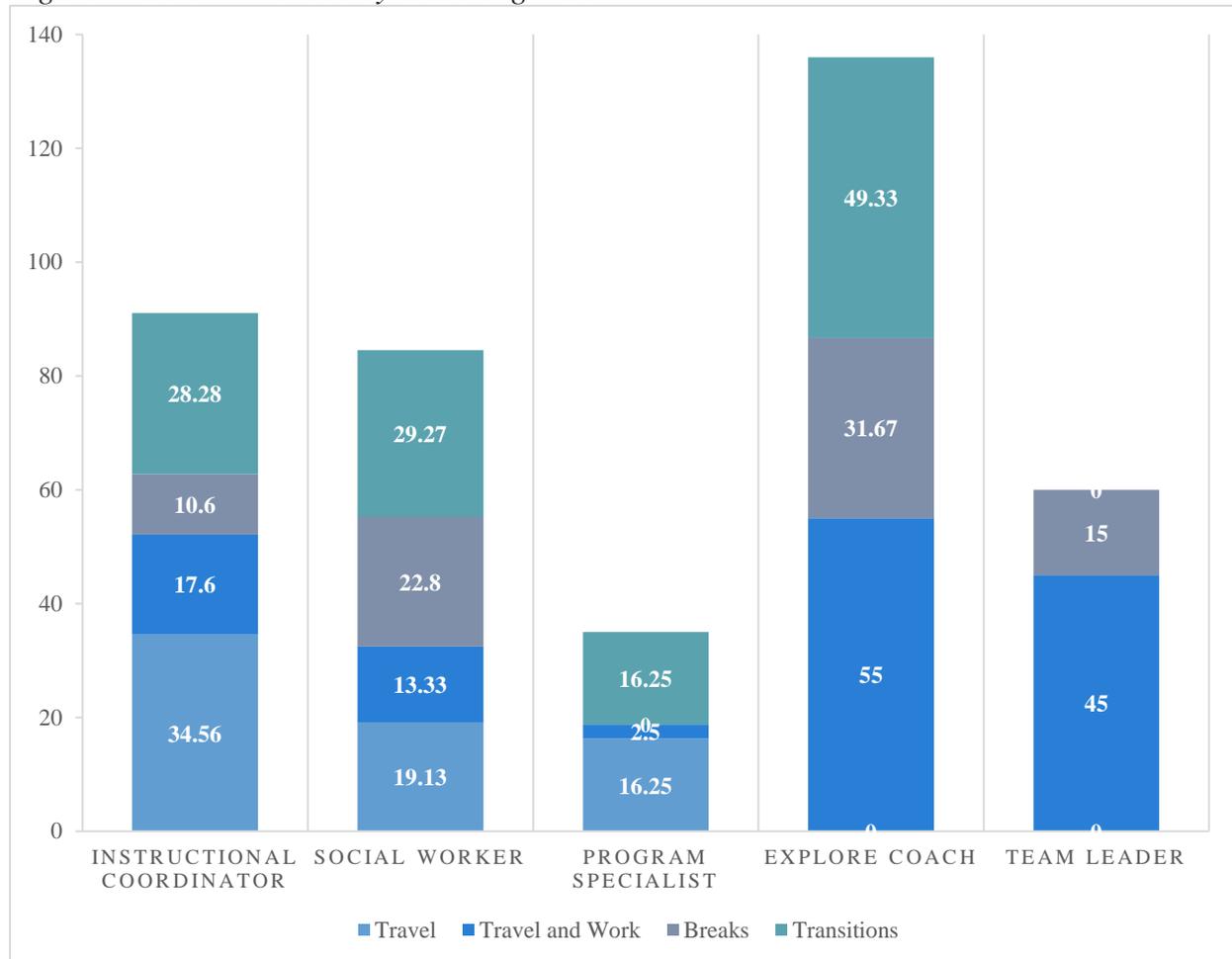
Similarly as can be seen in Table 5, program specialist Liz also reported much of her time being taken up working with pre-K sites and providing technical assistance. But in alignment with her support role, Liz worked with program leadership, monitoring the actions they had taken in the site since her previous visit.

*Table 5. Time Use of Program Specialist*

Start Time	End Time	Activity
10:30am	11:45am	Meeting with a family worker in office in center. Assisting with challenge of placing children in another center due to the closing of their center. Figuring out the right people to reach out to make transfers happen.
11:45am	12:15pm	Met with Executive Director of the site. Monitoring corrective action plan instituted by ACS. Reviewing their documentation.
12:15pm	1:00pm	Break
1:00pm	2:00pm	Met with the Education Director to continue to review documents for corrective action plan. Looking at files and reviewing policy.
2:00pm	3:00pm	Reviewing documentation and noting their progress.
3:00pm	3:15pm	Met with Education Director to discuss my observations and provide feedback.
3:15pm	4:00pm	Writing up report.
4:00pm	4:15pm	Meeting with Education Director and Executive Director to discuss my report.
4:15pm	4:30pm	Signing off on report. Report faxed to team leader.
4:30pm	8:00am	Travel home and personal time.
8:00am	8:10am	Check emails at home.
8:10am	9:30am	Commute to office
9:30am	10:00am	Continued to check email and did some printing of key attachments.
10:00am	10:20am	Filed paperwork
10:20am	10:30am	Met with colleagues re task they were asked to do by their team leader.

In addition to differences in the focus of their technical assistance, it seems that the site support role also mediated how participants spent their time in the “other” category. Figure 3 outlines the activities that comprised the other category of time use of site support personnel except for commuting to and from work.

Figure 3. Other Time Use by Coaching Role



As can be seen, the largest amount of time in the other category was spent on travel in between different pre-K programs. When the categories of travel and travel and work are combined, Explore coaches spent 55 minutes travelling to sites, instructional coordinators spent a little over 52 minutes, team leaders 45 minutes, social workers 32.46 minutes and program specialists 18.75 minutes. Transitions which we defined as setting up for the day such as signing in at a site varied across site support roles. Whereas program specialists spent 16.25 minutes engaged in this activity, Explore coaches reported 49.33 minutes involved in transitions. Breaks comprised a very small proportion of participants’ time regardless of role varying from 10.6 minutes on average for instructional coordinators to 31.67 minutes for Explore coaches.

In summary, across 3 different time points, most of the site support staff spent their time at programs providing technical assistance but this time use varied by role. When they were not providing on-site technical assistance and consultation, most of the site support staff were completing tasks in preparation for site visits or engaging in various agency related

paperwork. Interestingly, regardless of role or time point site support staff were least likely to be involved in designing and delivering professional development to teaching teams. This pattern may be because of when we interviewed participants as days were not chosen with any consideration of activities the coach might have scheduled.

### ***Participant Background and Time Use***

In an effort to explore further whether there were particular characteristics associated with the time use of site support personnel, we conducted a series of linear regressions to investigate how participant background (e.g. typical demographics like race/ethnicity as well as qualifications and teaching experience) might be associated with their time use within each major code and the total time spent within each category. As shown in Table 6, for the total work-related time, participants who identified as African American reported less minutes of total work than that of White site support staff; participants with teaching experience reported less minutes than those without any teaching experience. In addition, site support personnel with teaching certification reported more minutes of total work related time than those without teaching certification. Explore coaches reported longer total work time than the instructional coordinators. Site support personnel in general reported longer total work time for Mondays and Tuesdays than Fridays. Participant age was positively related to the total work time, but the years at current position were negatively related to the total amount of time in a day.

For the main time use codes, program specialists and Explore coaches reported significantly longer time spent on technical assistance than instructional coordinators. Site support staff in general also reported significantly longer time spent providing technical assistance for Thursday than Friday. Participant age was the only significant influence on time spent preparing and leading professional development workshops with older site support staff spending longer on this activity. Team leaders reported significantly longer time than the instructional coordinators doing agency related work. Interestingly, participants reported shorter time spent on agency work for Thursdays than Fridays. Program specialists spent less time engaged in “other” activities than the instructional coordinators.

Although we did find some associations between participant background characteristics and time use, these findings should be interpreted cautiously given the sample size and the fact that we only interviewed a very small number of Explore coaches, team leaders, and program specialists.

Table 6. Regression of Time Use overall by 3

Parameter	Technical Assistance		Professional Development.		Agency Work		Leadership Activity		Other		Total Time	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	295.53	116.85	-75.36	99.40	50.54	90.89	86.83	62.16	67.33	62.42	424.86	51.52
African American vs. White	-34.96	54.15	-26.42	46.06	-9.06	42.12	-9.38	28.80	-14.83	28.93	<b>-94.65***</b>	23.88
Hispanic vs. White	44.93	47.41	-74.11	40.33	-17.21	36.87	30.83	25.22	5.21	25.32	-10.35	20.90
Teaching Certification vs. No Certification	68.51	107.90	-54.97	91.79	147.75	83.93	-27.99	57.40	14.03	57.64	<b>147.34**</b>	47.58
Teaching Experience vs. No Teaching Experience	-86.02	51.49	56.27	43.80	-23.96	40.05	6.27	27.39	-5.33	27.50	<b>-52.77*</b>	22.70
Social Worker vs. Instructional Coordinators	11.61	101.98	-72.78	86.75	86.51	79.32	-1.44	54.25	18.38	54.48	42.28	44.97
Program Specialist vs. Instructional Coordinators	<b>169.97*</b>	77.93	-6.47	66.29	-41.25	60.61	-57.80	41.45	<b>-95.27*</b>	41.63	-30.82	34.36
Explore Coach vs. Instructional Coordinators	<b>205.60*</b>	99.90	-158.87	84.98	19.45	77.70	-5.74	53.14	93.16	53.37	<b>153.61**</b>	44.05
Team Leader vs. Instructional Coordinators	-47.47	107.10	-70.06	91.11	<b>252.78**</b>	83.31	-16.26	56.97	-44.82	57.22	74.17	47.23
Monday vs. Friday	174.77	107.64	144.57	91.57	-123.07	83.73	-32.83	57.26	100.23	57.50	<b>263.68***</b>	47.46
Tuesday vs. Friday	74.00	48.09	40.40	40.90	-44.33	37.40	5.70	25.58	19.52	25.69	<b>95.29***</b>	21.20
Wednesday vs. Friday	-29.38	46.34	72.81	39.42	-57.96	36.04	-22.58	24.65	17.75	24.76	-19.37	20.43
Thursday vs. Friday	<b>97.27*</b>	47.83	3.83	40.69	<b>-82.23*</b>	37.20	-19.96	25.44	15.78	25.55	14.69	21.09
Age	-2.23	1.80	<b>3.38*</b>	1.53	-0.39	1.40	-0.35	0.96	1.71	0.96	<b>2.11*</b>	0.79
Years of Coaching	-1.95	4.93	-3.65	4.19	4.15	3.83	1.17	2.62	-0.86	2.63	-1.14	2.17
Years at current position	2.29	4.95	-2.43	4.21	-1.72	3.85	-0.66	2.63	-5.18	2.64	<b>-7.70**</b>	2.18

## Discussion and Implications

Analysis of the time use of 49 site support personnel working in NYC's pre-K program illuminates 3 key takeaways.

Key takeaway 1: The time use of site support personnel is aligned with their roles and responsibilities. The findings suggest that social workers, instructional coordinators, team leaders, program specialists and Explore coaches are certainly spending much of their time out in programs working with educators and leaders as is to be expected. Moreover, how time was used when out in sites varied by their specific job role. Therefore when a site has several site support personnel visiting, each is providing a different kind of intervention. With the evolution of the Pod model of site support and the use of the online site support portal, pre-K programs appear to be receiving a coordinated system of technical assistance and consultation.

Key takeaway 2: The wide range of responsibilities of site support personnel require considerable planning. Although time use did not vary across time of year for any site support roles, it is important to note the wide range of activities that these individuals were involved in. When at a pre-K site they might meet with teachers, observe, help out in classrooms, meet with leaders or other professionals, work with parents, and share resources, among other actions. To be able to engage in these kind of tasks required careful preparation and set up. As the "other" category illuminated, site support personnel might spend some of their commute, travel time or time at home engaging in some of this preparation work.

As site support personnel roles are key to ensuring that pre-K program guidelines and policies are actualized in practice, these findings suggest several implications for leaders of New York City's pre-K program.

First, some consideration should be given to the variety of tasks that site support personnel are involved in. At the time of the study, site support staff engaged in a total of 10 different technical assistance activities and were also juggling various agency-related demands. Many of these individuals reported planning and getting ready for their various visits to sites when travelling between sites, and on their commute. Now that all of the pre-K site support personnel are working in one agency and working as teams across a number of pre-K sites, some consideration might be given to prioritizing activities rather than keeping the focus of each technical assistance and consulting role on content or a particular focus (e.g. children's emotional and mental health, curriculum and instruction, compliance with quality mandates). The housing of different site support roles within one agency provides a unique opportunity to create synergies across roles and ensure more efficient and effective interactions with pre-K programs.

Secondly, some consideration might be given to providing professional development opportunities for site support personnel that cuts across focus and role. Regardless of role, site support personnel did not report engaging in a lot of leadership activities which we defined as participating in some kind of learning community with colleagues or attending professional development for their own learning. Across the three time points they engaged in this kind of work between 42 and 61 minutes and much of this was talking with colleagues. This finding may be because of the research design as we only asked coaches to

identify a day of the week different to when they were last interviewed but we did not ask them to identify days that might vary because of activity and time such as a day when they might participate in some kind of leadership activity. In our conversations with the leaders of the Division of Early Childhood at the NYDOE regular professional development days have always been provided to its site support teams. In 2017-18 for example, instructional coordinators participated in 10 professional development sessions with topics ranging from culturally responsive coaching to next generation learning standards. Similarly social workers received monthly professional development sessions while Explore coaches participated in 9 coach development days that year. This practice of role-specific professional development for site support professionals in the pre-K program has continued since data was collected for this study. However, not all site support professionals in this study had pre-K teaching experience and or held a teaching certificate. While program specialists and social workers might not need these qualifications for their specific focus, each site support role is contributing to the improvement of instructional quality whether it be focusing on the organizational context, family engagement, or curriculum and pedagogy. As the Division of Early Childhood has moved to a pod model of site-support, leaders may want to consider implementing professional development opportunities that bring team members together around key issues they all face in their work with pre-K programs.

Since the time of this study a lot has changed organizationally, programmatically, and socially. Most significantly, site support personnel in NYC's pre-K program are now working within the confines of a pandemic requiring them to shift from their in-person approaches to virtual interactions or some combination of the two. Unfortunately there are no clear action plans for working in these times but there are some different approaches to site consultation and technical assistance that might serve as sources of wisdom. For example, teacher education programs and coaching models such as MyTeachingPartner (Pianta, Mashbrun, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008) are using videos teachers take of their instruction as one way to provide feedback and support. Depending on what technology is available it is also possible to set up on-line real time observations.

However, it should be noted that when site support professionals could work face-to-face, the second largest category of time use after technical assistance was the "other" category. While it may seem that activities like travelling are now less relevant given the pandemic, the reality is that when working virtually site support staff now have to navigate a whole new set of "other" activities (e.g. child care for their children while working virtually). The challenge becomes how to support these key personnel to navigate these challenges while also working with teachers and leaders and providing much needed technical assistance and consultation.

There is no model or innovation unfortunately for current times. But, perhaps by bringing site support staff together as a professional learning community where they can share their experiences of consultation and technical assistance virtually and in-person, and together identify strategies that work effectively, it might be possible to reframe the pre-K site-support model. In this way, social workers, instructional coordinators, and policy support team members can help support one another's professional development and work together as a group of leaders to continue their important work of supporting teaching teams and leaders to provide high quality pre-K programs to young children in New York City.

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## Steps to be taken by Interviewer

- 1) Email and set up a time to talk with the coach/professional development instructor.
- 2) Make sure you interview participants across a range of days i.e. you don't want to only hear about Mondays or Fridays but are trying to get a range of time use across the week.
- 3) Confirm the day before the interview with the call in information and that s/he needs to set aside approximately an hour for the interview. You might also suggest that they might want to note down for themselves key activities they have engaged in that day.
- 4) **When conducting the interview make sure to remind the interviewee that you will be audio recording the conversation but that they will be given a code so that they cannot be identified in any way.**
- 5) Begin by asking the background questions and then let the participant know you are turning to their time use.
- 6) For every section of time you must probe them to recall as many aspects of the activity as possible including who they were with, what actions they took. For example, a visit to a center to observe a teacher for an hour might include a meeting with a director, and doing some email in the staff room as well as observing the teacher. Catching a subway to a site, might include doing some email on the train. You are trying to capture as much of their work time use as possible so probe away. **MAKE SURE TO NOTE DOWN AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE AND KEEP THEM FOCUSED ON THE TIME THEY USED THIS ONE PARTICULAR DAY.**
- 7) At the end of the interview, thank the participant for his/her time and ask him/her if they can recommend another person we might reach out to for the study and their contact details.
- 8) Once the participant has hung up, you should type up your notes and fill in the detail by listening to the recording. The notes do not need to be verbatim but need to capture the time use as much as possible.
- 9) Once complete send your notes and the record to Kait Northey (Knorthey@nieer.org).

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

## Coach/PDI Questionnaire

**Interview Start and End Times:** \_\_\_\_\_

Hi, this is \_\_\_\_\_ from the National Institute for Early Education Research and I am excited to talk with you again. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Your responses will remain confidential, but they are very important to our study. No names or other identifiable information will be shared with anyone outside the research team or used in any public report. I'm going to start the audio recording now.

Interview Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) What is your full name? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How many programs do you serve? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How many teachers are a part of your caseload? \_\_\_\_\_

