One of the core elements of PIIC is that coaching and professional development focus on helping teachers use and analyze formative and summative data to identify student needs, assess how changes in classroom instructional practice can meet student needs, and track student progress. With the six circles of the Standards-Aligned System (SAS) in place, instructional coaches and mentors work with teachers and administrators to establish instructional practices in literacy across all content areas so that students are reading and writing to learn. PIIC has recognized that assessment is basic to improving student outcomes. If teachers, with the assistance of coaches, become skilled consumers of the many different kinds of formative data available to them, they will be able to use these data effectively to meet the instructional needs of their students.

PIIC mentors promote professional learning communities by facilitating ongoing staff development and reflective practice around formative assessments. They receive training in, and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of, all aspects of the Standards-Aligned System and Resiliency Framework. To support SAS further, the PIIC mentors work with districts within the IUs that have implemented the Penn Literacy Network (PLN) framework, the Reading Apprenticeship model, and/or other district-wide approved literacy models. Their knowledge base helps coaches work with teachers to understand better how to use assessments of student learning to modify curriculum and instruction to meet student needs. PIIC mentors help coaches understand the difference between monitoring progress for administrative purposes and looking for evidence of real learning.

Coaches, in turn, help teachers use formative assessments to identify their students' needs and examine student progress. This includes determining appropriate assessments for their students, collecting and analyzing classroom data that helps inform instructional decision-making, and accessing the appropriate materials and resources to address the students' learning needs. PIIC mentors help coaches facilitate professional learning communities where teachers and administrators focus on the essential strategies to improve schools. Those strategies include sharing a vision and mission about student learning, providing an evidentiary trail of active student learning, implementing a feedback loop for continuous improvement to close the gaps in learning, fostering a collaborative learning environment, and helping students recognize that learning is participatory.

Coaches trained by the PIIC mentors regularly use a variety of formative assessment tools based in part on Dylan Wiliam's work. Examples include but are not limited to: *entrance tickets and "do nows"; learning logs; class basketball; think, pair, share; question strips; summarizing and paraphrasing; reflective learning/journal writing; 3-2-1 exit tickets* and a variety of other techniques that enhance student learning, help teachers identify the gaps

in their student's learning, and determine where they need to make appropriate adjustments. Each of these formative assessment tools is an important component of the PIIC mentoring and coaching toolkit. Teachers and students regularly engage in collective problem solving and provide constructive feedback in order to modify instruction and reduce the learning gaps. The mentoring and coaching strategy is rooted in providing skills that help teachers improve their capacity to intervene on the basis of formative assessments in the classroom--before high stakes testing.

PIIC provides teachers with a variety of evidence-based literacy strategies associated with meeting student needs based on an ongoing assessment process. Aligning and embedding the six circles of SAS within our coaching framework and focusing on formative assessments are essential to the PIIC instructional coaching and mentoring model.