



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Blended Learning Initiative Report

Cohort 2, Year 2 (2019-20)

Key Findings

- Teachers reported that they used student program data to inform instruction.
- Principals said the initiative increased student engagement and provided more opportunities to use data to inform instruction.
- Most schools struggled to meet the recommended implementation targets provided by the vendors for rotation programs. This was a consistent challenge across all four years of implementation.
- Coaches conducted almost 800 sessions with teachers.
- Teachers' survey responses about coaches were overwhelmingly positive.

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About the Blended Learning Initiative (BLI)

In 2016-17, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) selected 39 schools, representing all grade levels, to be part of Cohort 1 of the Blended Learning Initiative (BLI). *Blended learning* is defined as students receiving instruction in part from a teacher and in part from an online content delivery system where students have some control over the time, path, or place of instruction. Online adaptive programs (OAP) are a supplemental instructional resource to support classroom instruction. By adding an OAP to their classroom, a blended learning model provides a differentiated instructional experience for students and provides principals and teachers actionable data to understand students' skills and abilities. Each BLI school chose a blended learning model (a la carte or station rotation) and a blended learning online adaptive program from a list of approved vendors. In a station rotation model, students participate in online learning at one of several stations (the others being teacher-led instruction and small-group or independent activities). In an a la carte model, students take one or more classes online in addition to their in-person classes. BLI schools received Chromebooks and two years of support from the Office of Educational Technology (2016-17 and 2017-18).

In 2018-19, the District selected a new cohort of 32 schools to receive support (Cohort 2). Each school had to apply to the Office of Educational Technology and indicate the number of classrooms that would implement blended learning. Selection criteria for schools included demonstrating an understanding of the model, an application that was supported by data, the inclusion of blended learning in their school plan, having a plan to provide training to teachers, selecting a school-level point person, and having methods for monitoring student usage and performance to maximize implementation effectiveness. Twenty-five of the 32 Cohort 2 schools were completely new, and seven were Cohort 1 schools approved to expand into additional blended learning classrooms (this report refers to schools in the former category as "new" and those in the latter category as "expansion" schools). "Cohort 2," then, includes participating teachers at the 25 "new" schools as well as newly participating teachers in expansion schools; in some cases, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 teachers taught at the same schools. The supports that participating Cohort 2 schools received included Chromebook carts to use with the OAP as well as teacher and principal coaching. Across the 32 schools, there was variation in the number of classrooms that participated in the BLI. This determined the number of Chromebook carts each school received.

The majority of classrooms across the 32 Cohort 2 BLI schools used a station rotation model. Schools could choose from 14 OAPs across nine approved vendors (some vendors have more than one OAP; see Table 1). While there were 14 approved OAPs, BLI classrooms only chose to use 11 of the 14 in 2019-20. At some schools, all BLI classrooms used the same OAP and/or vendor, while other schools used more than one OAP and/or vendor. This report looks at implementation of these 11 OAPs in the BLI classrooms during 2019-20, the second year of implementation for Cohort 2.

Table 1. List of approved vendors and online adaptive programs

Vendor	Online Adaptive Program (OAP)	Used by BLI Classrooms in 2019-20
Achieve3000	Achieve3000	Yes
Edgenuity	MyPath	Yes
Edgenuity	Pathblazer (Compass)	Yes
iReady	iReady ELA	Yes
iReady	iReady Math	Yes
Imagine Learning	Imagine Language & Literacy	Yes
Imagine Learning	Imagine Math	Yes
Jigsaw Learning	Teachtown	No
Learning A-Z	Headsprout	Yes
Learning A-Z	Raz Kids	Yes
Lexia	Lexia Core5	Yes
Lexia	Lexia Power Up	No
ThinkCERCA	ThinkCERCA	Yes
Waterford Research Institute	Waterford	No

What we examined

This report responds to three primary research questions as they relate to Cohort 2 Year 2 of the Blended Learning Initiative (BLI):

1. How did teachers and principals perceive BLI implementation in 2019-20?
2. How often did students use the online adaptive programs, and how did this frequency compare to previous years?
3. How frequently did staff from the Office of Educational Technology provide BLI coaching sessions, and what was the pedagogical focus?

Data collection and analysis

We used three data sources to answer the research questions: survey data, student OAP usage data, and coaching logs. These data sources and their corresponding research questions are described in Box 1.

Box 1. Data sources used for each research question in this report**Teacher and Principal Surveys**

Surveys were sent via email to all teachers (n=175) and principals (n=28) participating in the Blended Learning Initiative in January 2020. The response rate for teachers was 37% (n=65) and for principals was 36% (n=10). Descriptive statistics are presented for survey results, and open-ended items were analyzed for common themes. Survey data were used to answer Research Question 1.

Student OAP Usage Data

Vendors provided annual student OAP usage and growth reports to the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE). Reports included student usage from the beginning of the school year through March 13, 2020, when schools closed due to COVID-19. Students were only included in analyses if they were enrolled at that school for at least 90 days. These data were used to answer Research Question 2.

Coaching Logs

Staff from the Office of Educational Technology coached teachers in their classrooms on implementing blended learning. After each visit, they logged the school, teacher, primary coaching focus, and, if they observed the teacher, rated them on the foundational aspects of blended learning implementation. These data were used in Research Question 3.

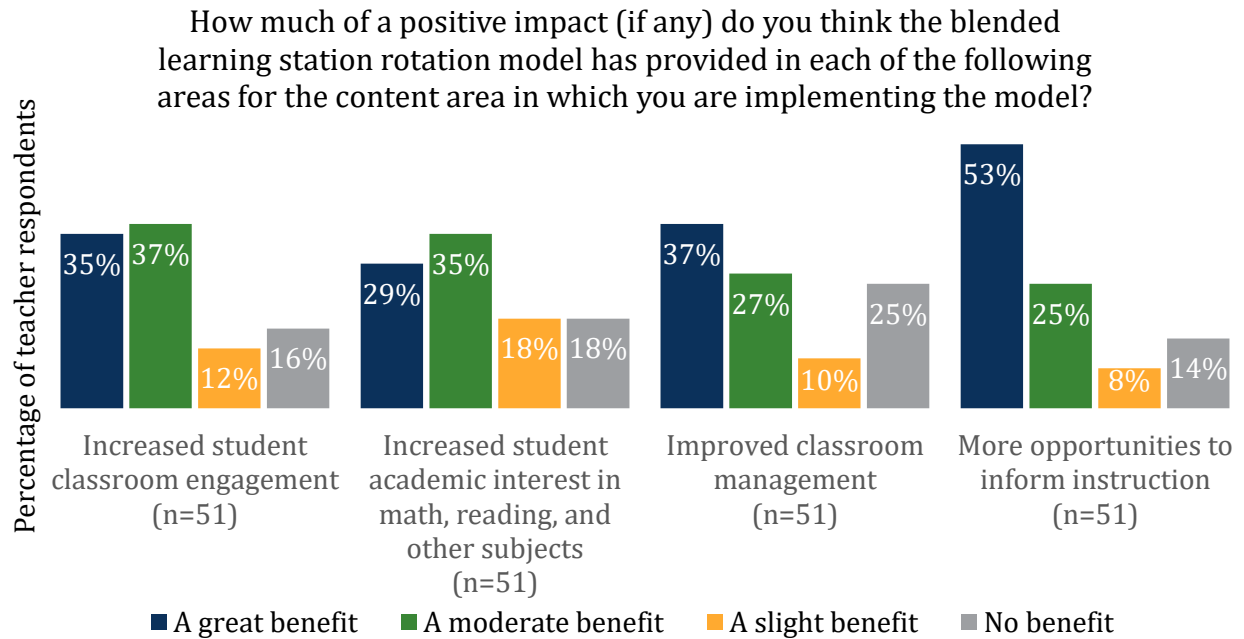
What the evaluation found

How did teachers and principals perceive BLI implementation in 2019-20?

Teachers said the BLI had benefits for instruction but that students struggled to work independently using an online adaptive program (OAP).

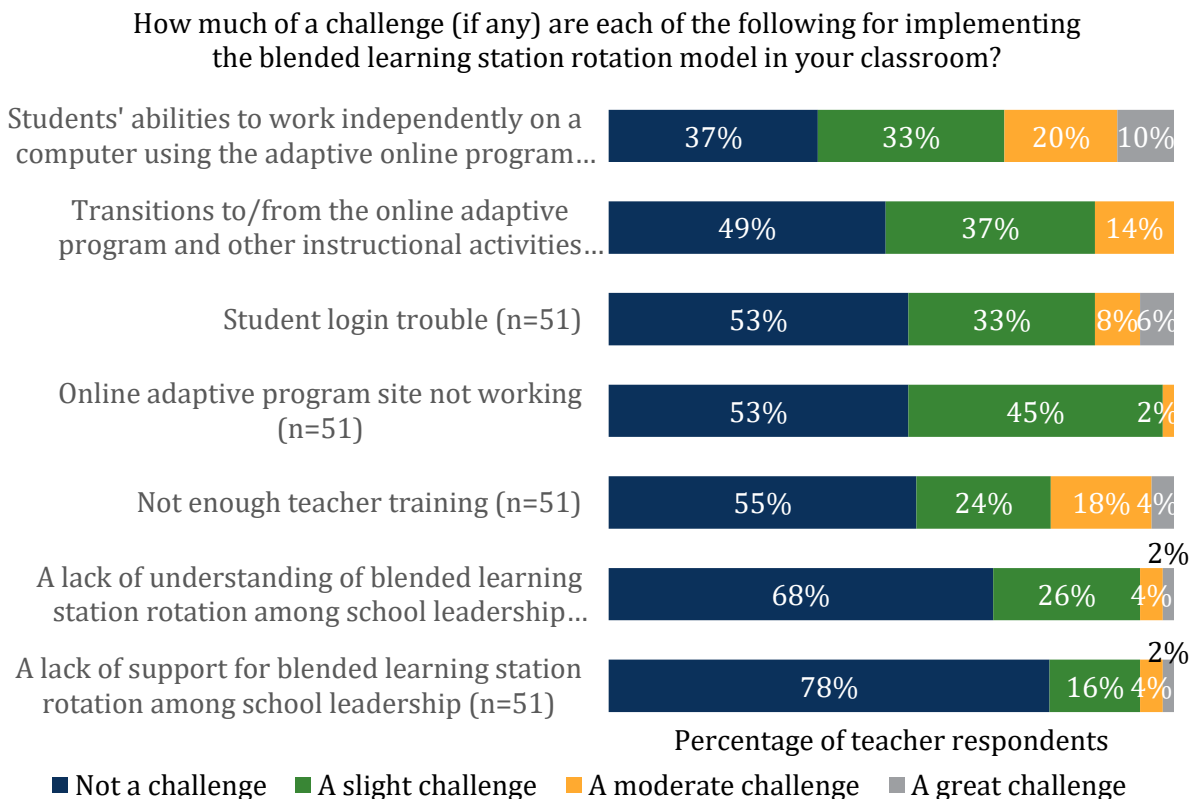
On the teacher survey, at least 60% of respondents felt the model had a great or moderate benefit in each of four areas: increased student classroom engagement, increased student academic interest, improved classroom management, and more opportunities to inform instruction (Figure 1). However, teachers found the greatest challenge to be students' abilities to work independently on a computer using the online adaptive program (Figure 2). The majority of respondents did not have problems with WiFi or hardware (Figure 3).

Figure 1. At least 60% of respondents felt the model had a great or moderate benefit in each of the four areas



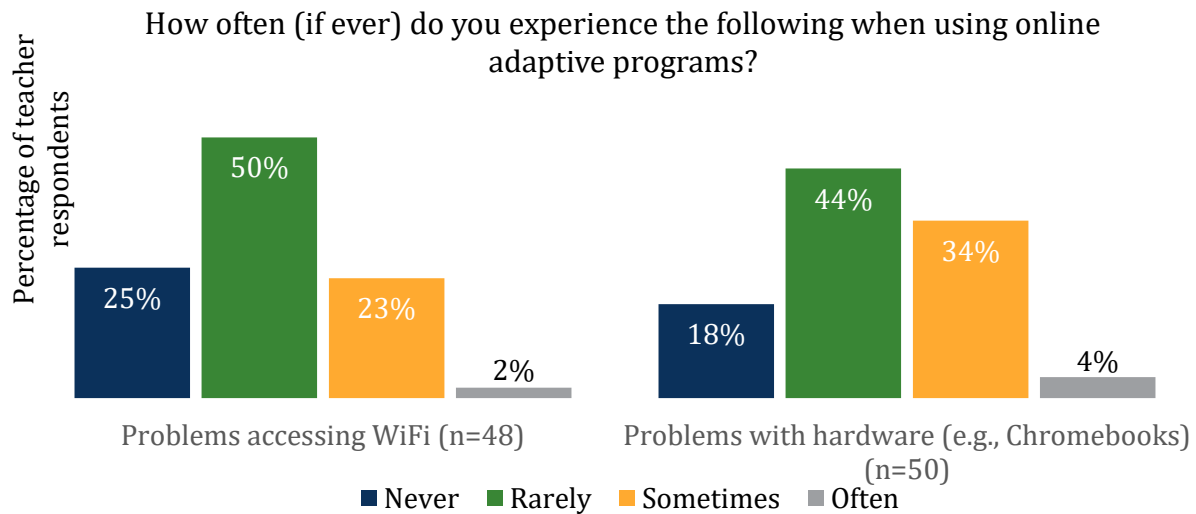
Source: Teacher survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Figure 2. Respondents found students' abilities to work independently to be the greatest challenge



Source: Teacher survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Figure 3. The majority of respondents never or rarely had problems with WiFi or hardware

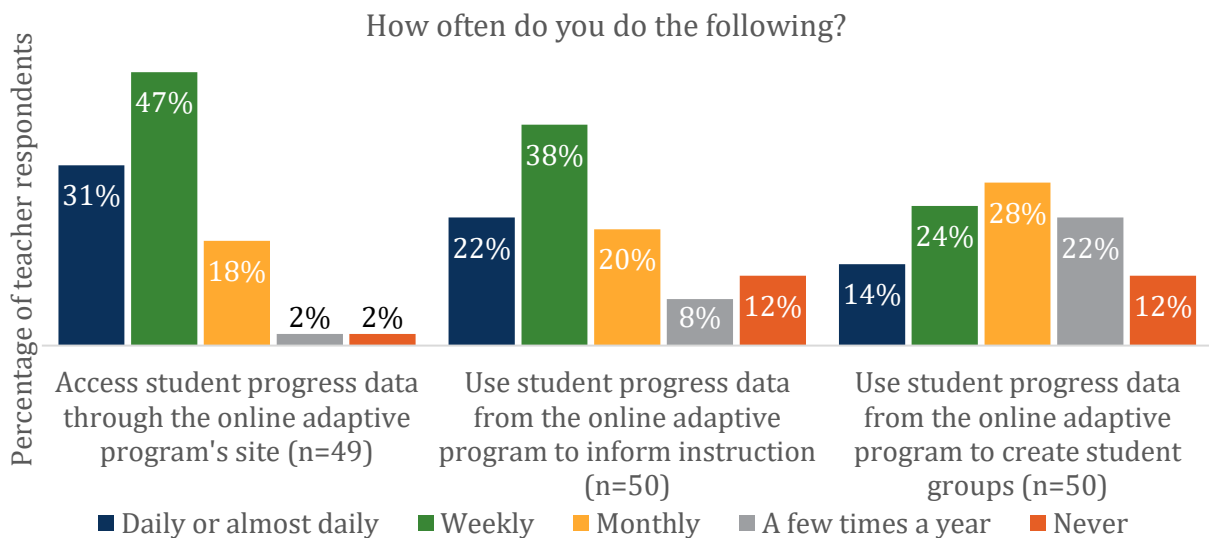


Source: Teacher survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Almost all teachers reported that they accessed student data through the vendor’s site.

Almost all teacher respondents (98%) said they accessed student data through the OAP’s site at least a few times a year, and 78% accessed data at least weekly (Figure 4). A slightly smaller amount (60%) used student progress data to inform instruction at least weekly, and 38% of teacher respondents said they used student progress data to create student groups at least weekly.

Figure 4. Almost all respondents said they accessed student data through the OAP’s site



Source: Teacher survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Teachers' responded positively to survey questions about coaches.

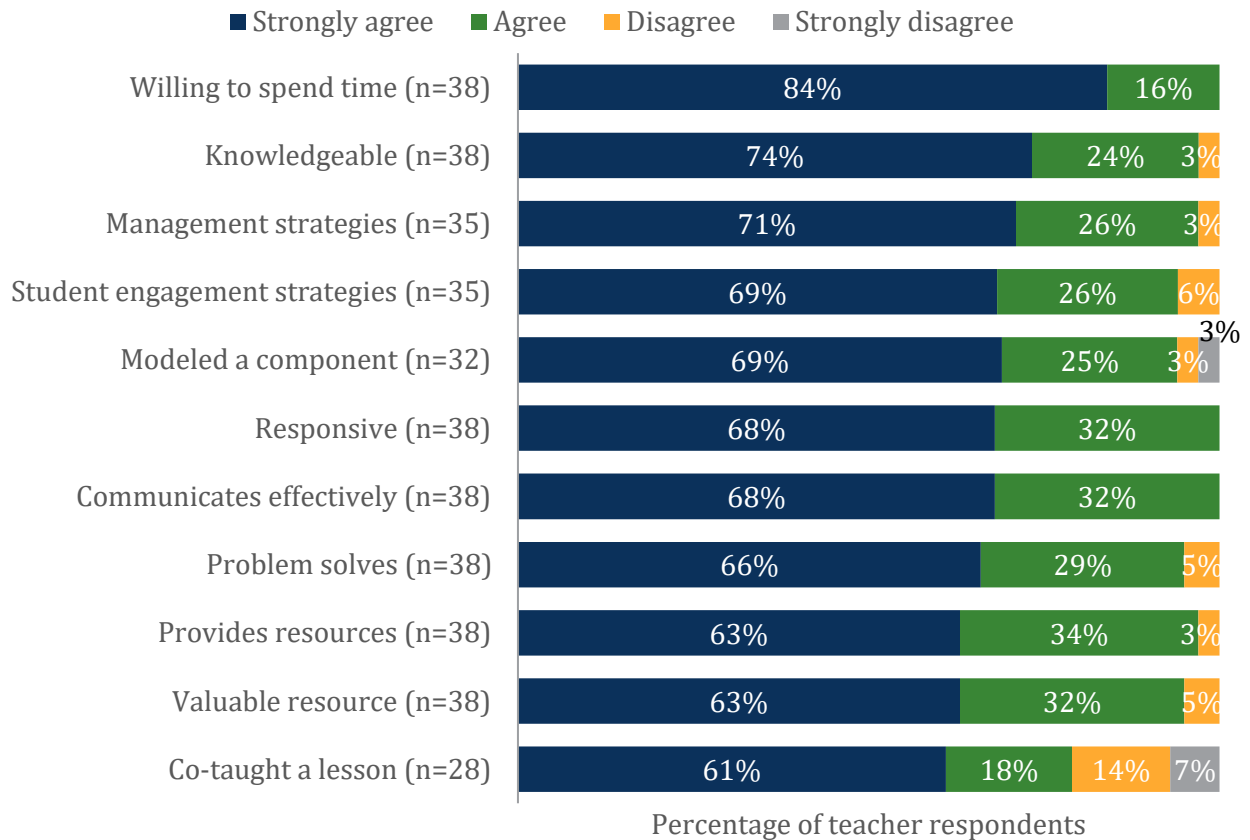
Teachers answered 11 questions about their coaches (Table 2). Teachers mostly rated coaches positively, with the percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with positive statements ranging from 79% to 100% (Figure 5). Survey questions asked about communication, support provided, and how effectively the coach conducted certain tasks, like modeling a blended learning component.

Table 2. Teacher survey questions about coaches

Question Text	Label in Figure 5
My coach communicates effectively.	Communicates effectively
My coach responds to my requests for assistance in a timely manner (responds within 48 hours).	Responsive
My coach provides me with resources to help meet the needs for my station rotation model environment.	Provides resources
My coach is knowledgeable about instructional strategies for implementing the station rotation model in my learning environment.	Knowledgeable
My coach is willing to spend the time needed to support me.	Willing to spend time
My coach has been a valuable resource to my understanding and execution of blended learning in my classroom.	Valuable resource
My coach problem solves and manages issues that may impede blended learning in the classroom.	Problem solves
My coach has effectively modeled a component(s) of blended learning for me.	Modeled a component
My coach has effectively co-taught a lesson(s) with me.	Co-taught a lesson
My coach has effectively assisted me with blended learning management strategies (classroom design, scheduling, grouping, transitions, anchor charts, technology support, etc.).	Management strategies
My coach effectively assisted me with strategies to better engage students (what's in each station, use of SmartBoards, other technology, student jobs, incentive systems, etc.).	Student engagement strategies

Note: Response options were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Figure 5. Teacher ratings of coaches

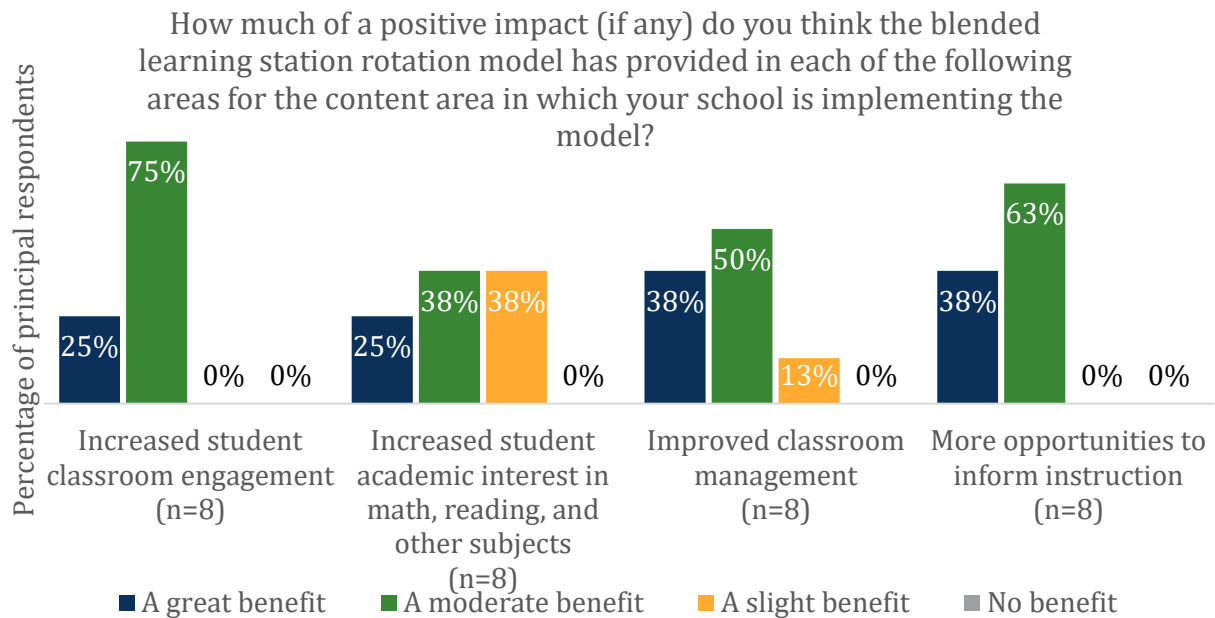


Source: Teacher survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Eight of eight principals said the BLI increased student engagement and provided more opportunities to inform instruction.

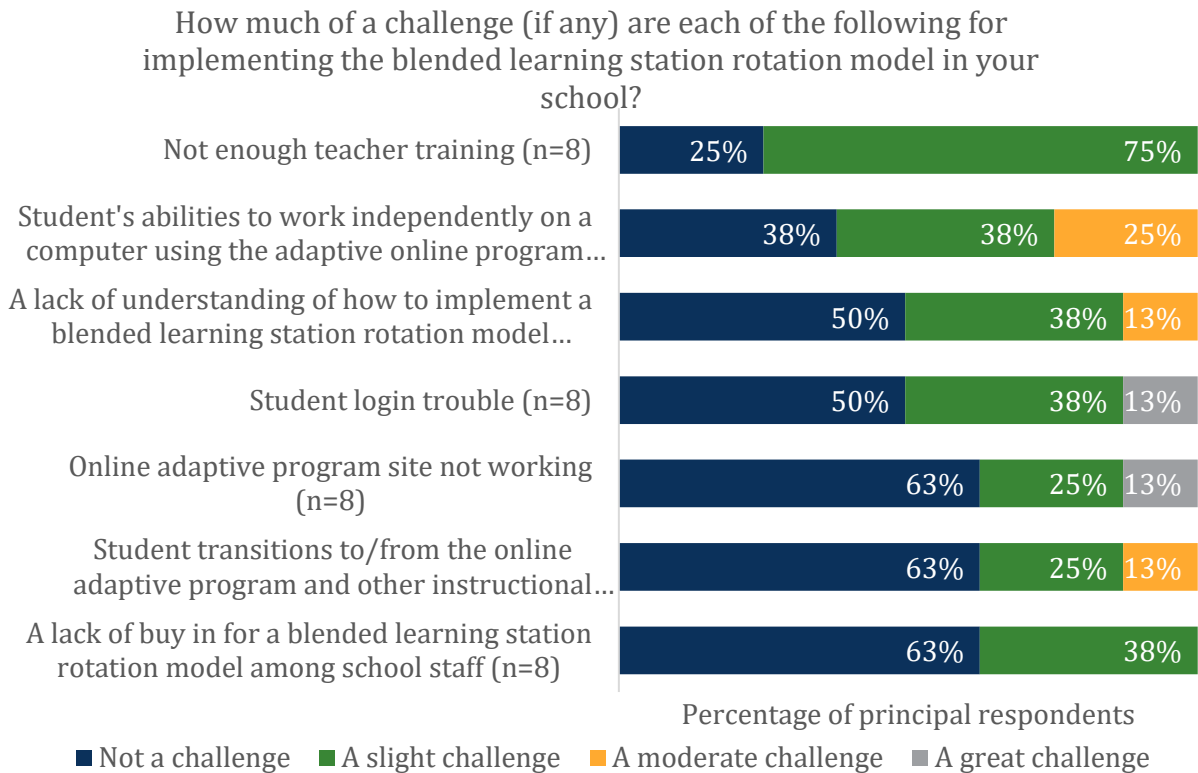
Similar to teachers, principal respondents also said the BLI had benefits for instruction. All respondents (eight of eight) said the initiative increased student classroom engagement and provided more opportunities to inform instruction (Figure 6). The majority of respondents also said that the BLI led to increased student academic interest and improved classroom management. Only one of the eight respondents reported any of seven areas as great challenges (student login trouble and OAP site not working; see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Eight of eight respondents said blended learning provided a great or moderate benefit toward increased student classroom engagement and more opportunities to inform instruction



Source: Principal survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Figure 7. Only one of eight respondents reported two areas as a great challenge

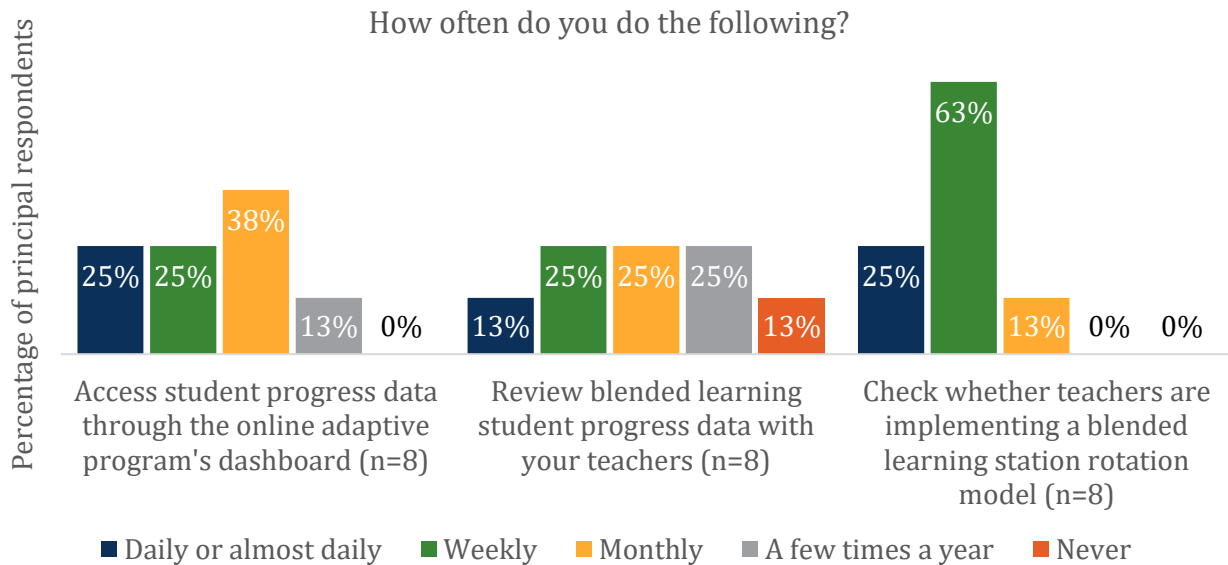


Source: Principal survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Eight of eight principals said they accessed student progress data during the year, and half reported doing so at least weekly.

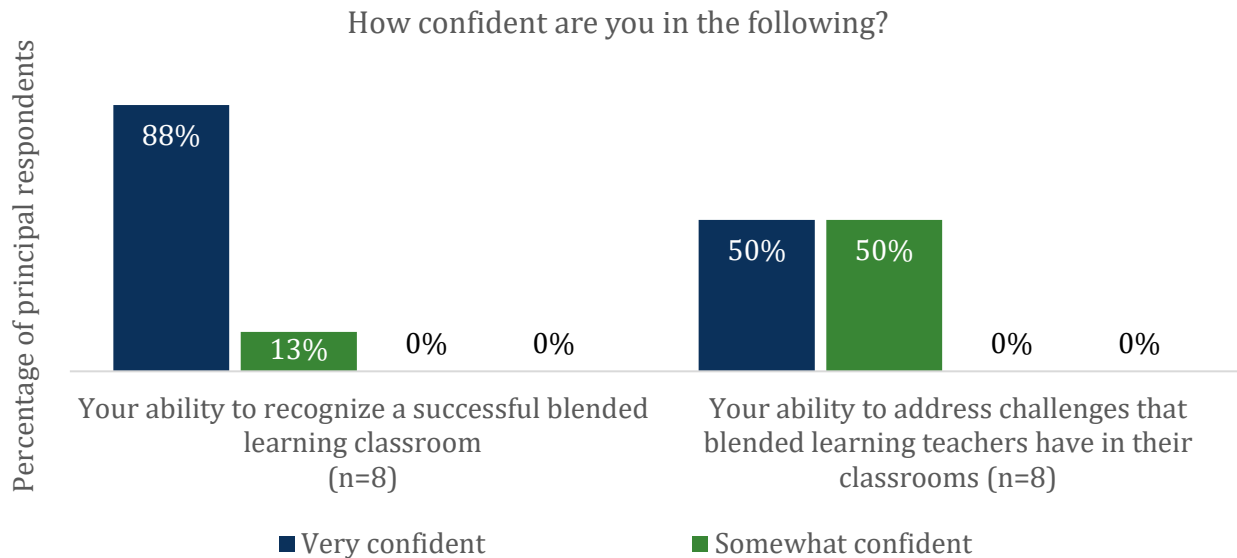
All eight principals reported accessing student progress data at least a few times a year, and half said they accessed data at least weekly (Figure 8). Only one principal said that they never reviewed progress data with teachers, and all eight said they checked that teachers were implementing a blended learning station rotation model at least monthly. All eight principals were also confident in their abilities to recognize a successful blended learning classroom and to address challenges that blended learning teachers have in their classrooms (Figure 9). Lastly, all eight principals found the support provided by Educational Technology to be very or somewhat helpful in four of the six areas (physically setting up a blended learning classroom for success, implementing a station rotation model, increasing teacher comfort level with OAPs, and establishing norms in a blended learning classroom; Figure 10).

Figure 8. Four of eight respondents said they *accessed* student progress data at least weekly



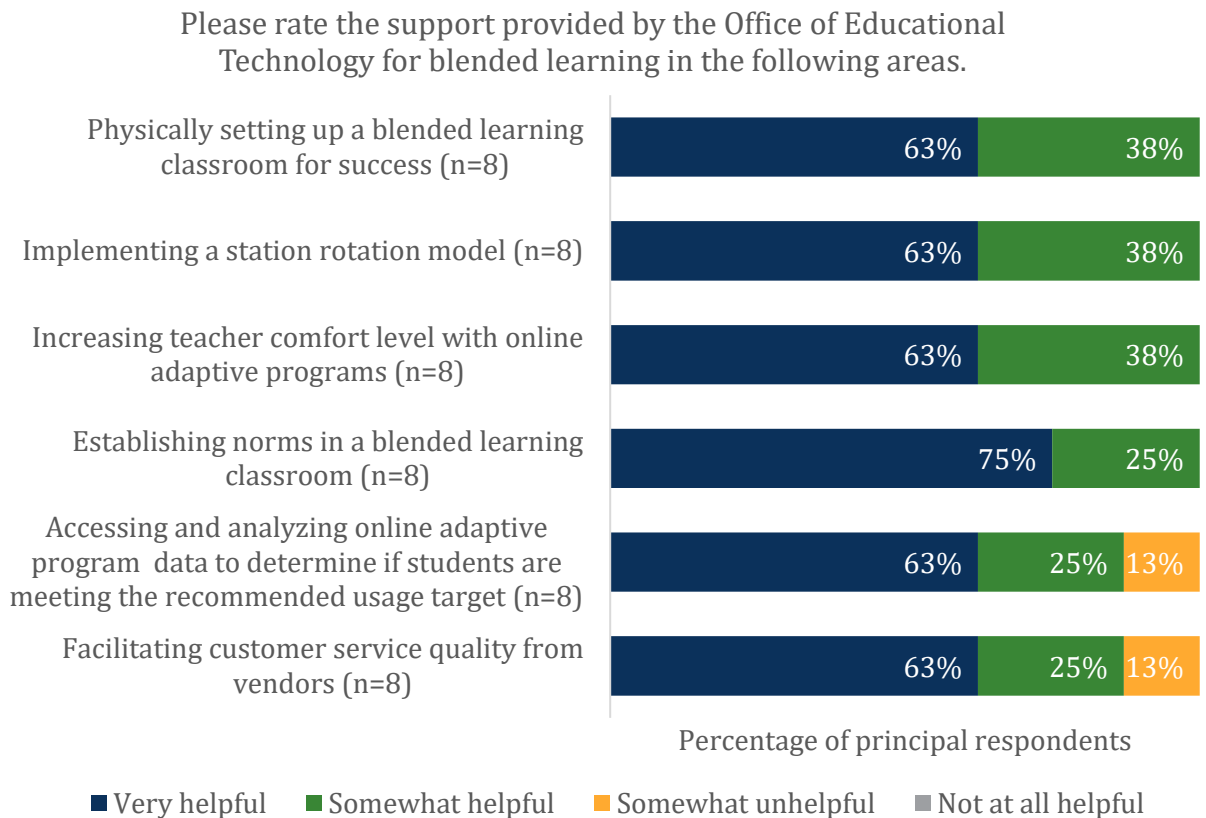
Source: Principal survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Figure 9. Eight of eight principals said they were very or somewhat confident of their ability to recognize a successful blended learning classroom and address challenges related to blended learning



Source: Principal survey administered by ORE (January 2020).

Figure 10. Eight of eight principals found the support provided by Educational Technology to be very or somewhat helpful in four of the six areas



How often did students use the online adaptive programs, and how did this compare to previous years?

Vendors provided student usage data for all students and teachers using OAPs at BLI schools through March 13, 2020 (when schools closed due to COVID-19). We only included students in this analysis if they were in a BLI classroom.¹

Average student OAP usage did not meet vendor targets.

Vendors provided the recommended targets for student data, both for usage (how often the student uses the OAP) and achievement (usually a pass rate or other indicator of mastery of content). There were 15 usage targets across the 7 vendors. On average, students across all the BLI schools and classrooms did not meet the recommended target for any of the usage metrics (Table 3). When looking at classroom-level student usage, out of the 237 classrooms participating,² there were 74 instances³ where a classroom met a recommended OAP usage target.

Table 3. Average Student OAP usage, and schools and classrooms meeting targets, 2019-20 (per week, unless otherwise noted)

OAP	Metric Target*	Average Student Usage across all BLI Classrooms*	Schools that Met Target	Classrooms that Met Target
Achieve3000	2-3 lessons	1.3 lessons	25% 1 of 4 schools	15% 4 of 26 classrooms
	90 minutes	28.1 minutes	0% 0 of 4 schools	0% 0 of 26 classrooms
Edgenuity Pathblazer Math	4 activities	1.5 activities	0% 0 of 2 schools	0% 0 of 14 classrooms
	60-90 minutes	21.7 minutes	0% 0 of 2 schools	0% 0 of 14 classrooms
Edgenuity My Path Math	4-5 hours	0.5 hours	0% 0 of 2 schools	0% 0 of 4 classrooms
Edgenuity My Path Reading	4-5 hours	0.5 hours	0% 0 of 1 school	0% 0 of 2 classrooms
iReady ELA	45 minutes	27.5 minutes	9% 1 of 11 schools	16% 8 of 51 classrooms

¹ Some teachers on the list provided by the Office of Educational Technology did not appear in the data for the assigned vendor. The list of teachers implementing blended learning may not match the list of teachers provided to the Office of Educational Technology at the beginning of the initiative due to fluctuations at the school in teacher assignments, retention, or other scheduling needs.

² This number reflects teachers on the list provided by the Office of Educational Technology who appeared in the vendor data.

³ Classrooms were counted as more than one instance if they met a usage target for more than one OAP.

OAP	Metric Target*	Average Student Usage across all BLI Classrooms*	Schools that Met Target	Classrooms that Met Target
iReady Math	45 minutes	34.6 minutes	15% 2 of 13 schools	25% 19 of 77 classrooms
Imagine Learning & Literacy	50-100 minutes	29.3 minutes	0% 0 of 2 schools	14% 3 of 22 classrooms
Imagine Math	60-90 minutes	21.4 minutes	0% 0 of 10 schools	2% 1 of 58 classrooms
	2-3 lessons	1.0 lessons	10% 1 of 10 schools	5% 3 of 58 classrooms
Learning A-Z Headsprout	3 episodes	0.2 episodes	0% 0 of 1 school	0% 0 of 9 classrooms
Learning A-Z Raz Kids	3 books read	1.4 books read	25% 1 of 4 schools	11% 4 of 38 classrooms
Lexia	60-100 minutes	54.2 minutes	40% 4 of 10 schools	35% 32 of 92 classrooms
ThinkCERCA	6 lessons per year	4.9 lessons per year	0% 0 of 1 school	0% 0 of 1 classroom

*Targets and classroom-level averages are provided per week (unless otherwise noted).

Source: Student OAP usage data provided by vendors. Teacher list provided by the Office of Educational Technology.

There were 8 achievement targets across the 7 vendors. On average, students across all BLI schools and classrooms met the recommended target for 4 of the 8 metrics (those 4 metrics are **bolded** in Table 4).

Table 4. Average Student OAP achievement and schools and classrooms meeting targets, 2019-20

OAP	Metric Target	Average Student Achievement across All BLI Classrooms	Schools Meeting Target	Classrooms Meeting Target
Achieve3000	75+% average first-try score	62.8% first-try score	0% 0 of 4 schools	4% 1 of 26 classrooms
Edgenuity Pathblazer Math	70% mastery	68.4% mastery	0% 0 of 2 schools	50% 7 of 14 classrooms
Edgenuity My Path Math	70% mastery	74.9% mastery	50% 1 of 2 schools	75% 3 of 4 classrooms
Edgenuity My Path Reading	70% mastery	76.9% mastery	100% 1 of 1 school	100% 2 of 2 classrooms
iReady ELA	70% pass rate	71.9% pass rate	64% 7 of 11 schools	67% 34 of 51 classrooms
iReady Math	70% pass rate	82.7% pass rate	100% 13 of 13 schools	95% 73 of 77 classrooms

OAP	Metric Target	Average Student Achievement across All BLI Classrooms	Schools Meeting Target	Classrooms Meeting Target
Imagine Math	80% pass rate	53.9% pass rate	10% 1 of 10 schools	16% 9 of 58 classrooms
Learning A-Z Raz Kids	80% pass rate	58.8% pass rate	0% 0 of 4 schools	5% 2 of 38 classrooms

Source: Student OAP usage data provided by vendors. Teacher list provided by the Office of Educational Technology. Bolded text indicates that the average usage for all BLI classrooms met the recommended target.

2019-20 was the fourth year of the Blended Learning Initiative (the second year for Cohort 2). In 2019-20, on average, none of the students using any of the programs met the recommended usage target provided by the vendors, compared to meeting between 10-25% of the metrics in previous years (Table 5). Students using BLI programs met the recommended achievement target on half of the metrics in 2019-20.

Table 5. Comparison of student data metrics across four years

School Year	Cohort	<u>Usage Metrics where Student Average for BLI Classrooms met Recommended Target</u>	<u>Achievement Metrics where Student Average for BLI Classrooms met Recommended Target</u>
2016-17	Cohort 1	25% 3 of 12 metrics	100% 3 of 3 metrics
2017-18	Cohort 1	10% 1 of 10 metrics	100% 1 of 1 metrics
2018-19	Cohort 2	17% 3 of 18 metrics	33% 3 of 9 metrics
2019-20	Cohort 2	0% 0 of 15 metrics	50% 4 of 8 metrics

Source: Student OAP usage data provided by vendors. Teacher list provided by the Office of Educational Technology.

How frequently did staff from the Office of Educational Technology provide BLI coaching sessions, and what was the pedagogical focus?

Staff members from the Office of Educational Technology offered coaching sessions to teachers on implementing blended learning. At the beginning of the year, coaches (in consultation with principals) designated teachers as needing intensive coaching support or as exemplar teachers who did not need as much support (new teachers were placed in the intensive coaching group). Exemplar teachers received brief check-ins or virtual/email check-ins rather than formal coaching. This section focuses on the 189 teachers (from 25 schools) who received intensive coaching. These teachers received an average of three coaching sessions during the year.

Coaches conducted almost 800 sessions, most often focused on co-planning.

There were four coaching cycles (each lasting four-six weeks), with each cycle progressing from foundational to more advanced skills. After the formal coaching cycles ended in February, coaches were supposed to provide informal coaching as needed to teachers through the end of the school year, but this period only lasted two weeks due to school closures related to COVID-19. Coaches conducted almost 800 sessions during the school year, with an average session length of 49 minutes (Table 6). Out of five focus areas, sessions focused most often on co-planning (340 sessions), followed by co-teaching (271 sessions; see Table 7).

Table 6. Coaches conducted almost 800 sessions with 189 teachers in 2019-20

Cycle	Dates	Number of Coaching Sessions	Average Session Length
1	September 9-October 18	222	51 minutes
2	October 21-November 27	275	48 minutes
3	December 2-January 17	198	47 minutes
4	January 20-February 28	78	50 minutes
Informal/as needed	March 2-March 13*	6	53 minutes
Total	September 9-March 13	779	49 minutes

Source: Coaching logs completed by Office of Educational Technology staff.

*Informal/as needed sessions would have continued through the end of the school year if not for school closures on March 13, 2020 due to COVID-19.

Table 7. Coaching sessions most often focused on co-planning in 2019-20

Coaching Focus	Example Coaching Goal	Number of Sessions Where Area was Primary Focus	Number of Sessions Where Area was Secondary Focus
Co-planning	“Supporting rotation schedule and small group dynamics.”	340 sessions	36 sessions
Co-teaching	“Co-taught the reading rotation block; working with small group of students; logging in and supporting intervention team.”	271 sessions	18 sessions
Modeling	“To present a model lesson in Smart Learning Suite that can be used as an independent center activity aligned with the text.”	72 sessions	7 sessions
Conferencing for feedback	“To review student usage and explore ways to make sure all students meet the minimum requirements.”	61 sessions	36 sessions

Coaching Focus	Example Coaching Goal	Number of Sessions Where Area was Primary Focus	Number of Sessions Where Area was Secondary Focus
Conferencing for goal setting	"Reviewed norms with regards to Chromebook use and station transition. Also discussed online adaptive program usage metrics with teacher."	35 sessions	18 sessions

Source: Coaching logs completed by Office of Educational Technology staff.

Conclusion

During the 2019-20 school year, the second year of the second cohort of the Blended Learning Initiative, we found:

- Teachers said the BLI had benefits for instruction but that students struggled to work independently using an OAP.
- Almost all teachers reported that they accessed student data through the vendor’s site.
- Teachers’ survey responses about coaches were overwhelmingly positive.
- Eight of eight principals said the BLI increased student engagement and provided more opportunities to inform instruction.
- Eight of eight principals said they accessed student progress data during the year and half reported doing so at least weekly.
- Most schools struggled to meet the recommended implementation targets provided by the vendors for rotation programs. This was a consistent challenge across both implementation cohorts, though 2019-20 was the first year that the average usage of BLI students did not meet the recommended threshold for any vendor metric.
- Coaches conducted almost 800 sessions with teachers.