

Evaluation of the New York City *Pre-K for All* Initiative, 2014–15

Implementation Study Report: Program Supports

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Pre-K for All 2014-15 Evaluation Response Memo

Pre-K for All is New York City's historic initiative to provide every four-year-old with access to free, full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten through a two-year expansion that began in the 2014-15 school year. Before Pre-K for All, only 19,287 four-year-olds were enrolled in full-day pre-K in New York City; as of the 2015-16 school year, enrollment was 68,647.

The City implemented the rapid, at-scale universal pre-K program within a short two-year timeframe because filling the gap in access to full-day pre-K was crucial—four-year-olds eligible to enroll in September 2014 would not get another chance to attend pre-K. The City secured funding and quickly began to prepare for the 2014-15 school year. In the summer of 2014, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) and partner agencies worked closely with pre-K providers to ensure they were ready to open their doors on the first day of school. At the same time, the City launched an unprecedented grassroots campaign to recruit and enroll families. This included establishing an Outreach Team of dedicated pre-K enrollment specialists to call families and canvas local communities.

The City's comprehensive approach was grounded in creating a sustainable, high-quality, full-day pre-K model. From its inception, the expansion focused not only on ensuring access but also on investing in pre-K quality. The City built a single system of free, full-day, high-quality pre-K and developed a quality infrastructure to support long-term sustainability and quality improvements. The DOE's model provides all pre-K programs with differentiated support at the classroom- and program-level that focuses on implementing research-based instructional and family engagement practices. Some examples include: free and targeted professional learning for leaders, lead teachers, assistant teachers, and paraprofessionals; on-site support for leaders and teachers from Instructional Coordinators (ICs) and Social Workers (SWs); and guidance through online tools and other resources.

The first year of the expansion marked the beginning of a rigorous two-part research study of this work. The DOE, in conjunction with the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, collaborated with Westat, Metis Associates, and Branch Associates, with supplemental support from the New York University's Institute for Human Development and Social Change, to undertake a study to inform future years of program delivery as well as lay the foundation for long-term research in the future. The Year 1 evaluation of Pre-K for All included an evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation process and a snapshot of student learning in the first year of the Pre-K for All initiative.

This memo summarizes the findings of the Year 1 evaluation of Pre-K for All and concludes by outlining accomplishments and improvements made in the 2015-16 school year that address many of the report findings.

Year 1 Evaluation Overview

The analysis conducted over the course of the 2014-15 school year was based on surveys, focus groups, interviews, and assessment data from a variety of stakeholders including parents, teachers, principals, site directors, DOE staff, and staff from other City agencies. The evaluation covered seven areas of Pre-K for All's implementation and are captured in separate reports:

1. Family perceptions of the program
2. Family engagement and communication

3. Curriculum and instruction
4. Using data for programmatic and instructional purposes
5. Expansion rollout
6. Program supports
7. Executive functioning and academic skills

Overall, the studies found:

- 92 percent of surveyed parents rate the quality of their child’s pre-K program as “good” or “excellent” and 83 percent of surveyed parents report that Pre-K for All improved their child’s learning and behavior “a lot.”
- Sites offering Pre-K for All report using a variety of family engagement and communication practices.
- Sites offering Pre-K for All report that they feel supported by the DOE in implementing curriculum.
- Sites offering Pre-K for All report using a wide variety of data to inform instruction and make programmatic decisions.
- Most providers that applied to offer free, full-day Pre-K for All report that the application process was clear and well-supported.
- Nearly 80 percent and 88 percent of site leaders report that staff recruitment and staff retention, respectively, did not pose significant challenges.
- A majority of site leaders and teachers report using each type of support provided by the DOE (*ex: coaching, professional development, etc.*). In general, Pre-K for All sites report that these supports are helpful.
- A positive impact on students—across income levels, race, and home language status—was seen through their gains in executive functioning skills and academic skills over the course of the study period.

Year 1 Evaluation Report Summaries

1. Report on Family Perceptions

- 92 percent of surveyed families rate the quality of their child’s pre-K program as “good” or “excellent,” and 83 percent report that Pre-K for All improved their child’s learning and behavior “a lot.”
- Nearly 80 percent of surveyed families report receiving resources from their Pre-K for All program to support learning at home.
- Families report that the availability of Pre-K for All affected decisions about child care and labor force participation.
 - Of the families that were surveyed, more than half (56 percent) report a decrease in spending on childcare from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Surveyed families report an average decrease of \$78 per week in spending.
 - Of the families that reported that Pre-K for All affected the number of hours they worked, half report an increase in hours worked, which they attribute to the availability of full-day pre-K.

2. Report on Family Engagement and Communication

- Overall, sites report undertaking a variety of family engagement and communication practices as a component of Pre-K for All. These include, but are not limited to: using face-to-face communication, providing updates on students’ achievements, having accessible program staff and multi-lingual staff, translating communications, using family input to make decisions, and providing opportunities for families to be involved with the program.
- Survey and interview findings also demonstrate that site leaders and instructional staff express a commitment to involving families in the education of their children.

3. Report on Curriculum and Instruction

- Overall, Pre-K for All sites report using a range of curricula to meet the needs of their students and that curriculum satisfaction is high among staff.
- The large majority of site staff report that their curriculum is vertically aligned to kindergarten and beyond, either to a moderate or large extent.
- Pre-K for All sites report using their curricula effectively and confidently to meet students' needs; however, program staff also report requests for continued training and support to improve quality.

4. Report on Use of Data for Programmatic and Instructional Purposes

- Overall, Pre-K for All sites report using a wide range of data to inform site-level programmatic decisions and classroom-level teaching practices, which include: authentic assessments of children's learning, program quality assessments, and feedback from DOE support staff and families.
- Authentic assessment data is a valuable data source for children's learning and development and 89 percent of sites report using these data for a variety of purposes. However, sites' perceived comfort with the authentic assessment systems vary by site type.
- 89 percent of site leaders report that their site uses data to engage families to a moderate or large extent.

5. Report on Pre-K for All Expansion Rollout

- Most providers that applied to offer full-day pre-K report that the application process was clear, easy to navigate, and well-supported. In general, sites report understanding how to be in compliance with DOE and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) expectations.
- Key stakeholders report that the engagement of a large number of key players and City agencies, increases in City agency capacity and infrastructure, and collaboration within and between City agencies, demonstrated a high-level of commitment to reach the initiative's goals and were major successes.
- Nearly 80 percent and 88 percent of site leaders report that staff recruitment and staff retention, respectively, did not pose significant challenges.
- On average, lead teachers report having five years of experience in a pre-K educational setting and almost 13 years in any educational setting. Approximately eight out of every ten lead teachers report having the NYS Early Childhood certification and almost all of those who did not have certification were currently pursuing it.
- Overall, the large majority of surveyed pre-K instructional staff report being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their pre-K teaching experience in 2014-15.

6. Report on Program Supports

- A majority of site leaders and teachers report receiving or using each type of support provided by the DOE (*ex: coaching, professional development, etc.*), and a majority also report that each type of support was "moderately" or "very" helpful.
- Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) report that they or their staff participated in the DOE-sponsored training that took place four times during the year. Overall, the large majority of site leaders and instructional staff (80 percent) report finding each of these professional development opportunities to be helpful.

- Sites report using a variety of resources and materials to support implementation of their Pre-K for All program. Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) report that their site used the DOE website to access units of study, lesson plans, and guidelines for the daily schedule, among other resources. They report the website is useful.

7. Report on Executive Functioning and Academic Skills

- A unique feature of this study is the collection of data on children’s executive functioning skills, a set of skills that includes their inhibitory control, working memory, and ability to shift between pieces of information, that together support children’s self-regulation. Executive functioning skills were measured by two widely-used assessments known as the Pencil Tap task and the Hearts and Flowers task.
- Statistically significant fall-to-spring gains were observed in both measures of executive functioning. The gains in the percentage of correct responses in the Pencil Tap and Hearts and Flowers tasks were 10 percent and 18 percent, respectively.
- Children attending Pre-K for All made statistically significant gains across all academic skills (Letter Recognition, Pre-writing, and Early Math) over the course of a 5.5-month testing window. By the end of this time period, Pre-K for All children outpaced the learning of four-year-olds nationally and were classified as being in the average range across all academic skills.
- This study featured a pre-post design without a comparison group, which means that observed gains in child learning cannot be attributed solely to participation in Pre-K for All. Children naturally learn and develop over time, and the study design means that these gains are confounded with the effects of the Pre-K for All program. Therefore, we cannot estimate the extent to which Pre-K for All was responsible for the children’s learning and development.

2015-16 | Year 2

Updates

The accomplishments and improvements in the second year of the expansion build on the work done in Year 1 to develop a high quality Pre-K for All system. They were informed by the results from the 2014-15 evaluation of Pre-K for All, feedback from Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) field staff, ongoing program assessments, and partnerships with early childhood education experts.

In the second year of the expansion, the DOE introduced the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards (PQS), which define the DOE’s vision for high-quality Pre-K for All programs in NYC. The PQS describes the key practices of family engagement, rigorous and developmentally appropriate instruction, professional collaboration, and leadership that support children in gaining the knowledge and skills outlined in the [NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core \(NYS PKFCC\)](#). The PQS establishes a shared set of expectations for all pre-K programs; the DOE, leaders, educators, and families all use the PQS to understand and advance program quality.

EXPANSION AND POLICY

- The 2015-16 school year marked the first time that every four-year-old in New York City had access to free, full-day, pre-K. As of the 2015-16 school year, 68,647 children were enrolled across all Pre-K for All programs—a number more than triple the number of children who were enrolled before the expansion and larger than the entire school population of major cities like Boston. Enrollment is high across every community, with the highest participation among low-income families.

- The DOE introduced a streamlined pre-K enrollment process for families, which provides one application for families to apply to pre-K programs. Overall, 88 percent of families received a pre-K offer to one of their top three choices through the new streamlined application process.
- The DOE developed and shared critical policy guidance for NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) to ensure they are adequately supported as they join or continue as Pre-K for All partners.

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORTS: In 2015-16, the DOE continued to advance its differentiated supports to all programs, tailoring support to each program’s needs in order to meet Pre-K for All’s Program Quality Standards.

Instructional Tracks and Lanes

- The DOE launched its Pre-K for All Instructional Tracks, providing every pre-K site with differentiated professional learning through a Summer Institute for teachers and leaders and a series of four teacher sessions and three leader sessions during the school year. Based on a variety of factors such as interest, demonstrated need, recommendations from Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers, site quality, and geography, sites were selected to participate in one of the following professional learning tracks and lanes:
 - *NYC Pre-K Explore*: Pre-K sites that participated in the Explore track used the evidence-based Building Blocks math curriculum together with the Pre-K for All Interdisciplinary Units of Study. Paired together, these materials provide a comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate approach to learning in pre-K.
 - *Advancing Social Emotional Development*: Pre-K sites in this lane advanced ways to support pre-K learners in developing social emotional skills needed to build a positive sense of self, form positive relationships, self-regulate, and adapt to change.
 - *Using Data to Inform Instruction*: Pre-K sites in this lane moved each child forward by learning new strategies to identify and meet each learner’s needs, using authentic assessments and other data points.
 - *Supporting Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners*: In this lane, pre-K sites built on the diverse backgrounds and languages children and families brought to the classroom, with strategies for developing learning environments in which all children can thrive and all families are strong partners.

Coaching

- The DOE expanded its cadre of staff to provide on-site support to programs, including Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers.
- To more effectively differentiate support, in the 2015-16 school year, Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers conducted over 1,800 Foundational Support Visits (FSVs) to pre-K sites. Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers used information from these initial visits, ongoing observations, and pre-K program quality assessments to tailor their supports.
- The DOE established partnerships to provide specialized coaching for programs in targeted areas such as the Building Blocks math curriculum and using data to inform instruction.

Interdisciplinary Units of Study

- The DOE created the Pre-K for All research-based Interdisciplinary Units of Study to support student learning in all domains using developmentally appropriate practice. Throughout the year, the DOE released ten interdisciplinary units grounded in the NYS PKFCC.

PROGRAM MEASUREMENT AND USE OF DATA

- Because of its commitment to consistent quality measurement through program assessments, the DOE increased its capacity to provide more frequent program assessments, the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The DOE committed to a three-year cycle for each assessment by the 2016-17 school year for ECERS-R and the 2017-18 school year for CLASS.

OTHER KEY INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- The DOE partnered with researchers at New York University to develop a system of differentiated support that utilizes data on program needs and quality levels; the purpose of this system is to make decisions about the supports each program in our system receives across various aspects of the Pre-K Quality Standards. This is part of an ongoing partnership between DECE and NYU.
- In 2015-2016, the DECE continued its partnership with the Office of Special Education to develop resources and professional learning opportunities so that Instructional Coordinators, Social Workers, teachers, and leaders further strengthen their work to ensure that all children are successfully supported in achieving high expectations for their learning and developmental progress.
- The DOE launched a historic Teacher Incentive Program to support NYCEECs in recruiting and retaining top talent. Through the Pre-K for All Lead Teacher Incentive Program, there are two types signing incentives for certified lead teachers in Pre-K for All classrooms: the Retention Incentive Program for returning certified lead teachers and the New Hire Incentive Program for newly-hired certified lead teachers.

YEAR 2 EVALUATION

The Year 2 evaluation will produce actionable findings that will inform how the DOE can support pre-K programs to advance student learning. The Year 2 evaluation seeks to inform:

- How programs can better support students of different backgrounds and needs and how differentiated supports can serve students with special needs, students whose home language is a language other than English, and students living in poverty.
- The impact of the Pre-K for All's coaching models and professional development to understand how well the DOE is targeting sites for the right kinds and dosage of support based on the areas of growth identified in Year 1 and the Foundational Support Visit.

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***Pre-K for All* Evaluation** **Program Supports**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Westat, Metis Associates, and Branch Associates are conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the *Pre-K for All* initiative in New York City to assess the implementation and outcomes of this effort. As a demonstration of its commitment to learning and quality improvement, the City—the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and the New York City Department of Education (DOE), in cooperation with the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS)—undertook this evaluation beginning in 2014 as a means of gaining actionable information to inform implementation. Work in this area is expected to continue into the future.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *Which supports do sites use the most? And which supports are most helpful?*
2. *How are sites using the supports? Are there differences by site type and program length? How could they be improved?*

This report presents implementation findings on the topic of program supports from the perspective of *Pre-K for All* site administrators and instructional staff. Program supports include the various types of training, preparation, resources, and materials that were provided to *Pre-K for All* sites in 2014–15 to help them implement the program. Sources of data include surveys of site administrators and instructional staff from a sample of 201 sites, and in-depth interviews with administrators and staff at 40 of these sites, as well as a review of available documentation. The sites included in the study were sampled to be representative of all *Pre-K for all* sites and recruited to participate in the evaluation. Findings are based on self-reported data; the provision and use of program supports was not directly observed. Survey response rates were 91 percent for site administrators and 69 percent for instructional staff.

In addition to presenting survey and interview findings across all study sites, selected data are reported for the following subgroups of programs and respondents:

- **Site type.** This includes three categories, two of which include programs known as New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) operated by independent organizations under contract to DOE (DOE NYCEECs) or ACS (ACS NYCEECs). The third category is district schools. Because of the small sample size, results for charter schools are not presented separately, but are included in the aggregate.
- **Program length.** All *Pre-K for All* sites operate full-day programs. In this report, sites are categorized as: “existing or expanded” (full-day program that maintained their same size enrollment or expanded the number of seats), “conversion” (programs that converted from a half- to a full-day), and “new or newly contracted” (district schools or NYCEECs operating a pre-K program for the first time as well as programs in existence for various lengths of time prior to contracting with the DOE or ACS).
- **Staff position.** This includes site leaders (i.e., school administrators or site directors), lead teachers, and teacher assistants who may be teacher aides or paraprofessionals.

This report identifies the most used and most helpful types of supports, and describes the use and perceptions of these supports, including professional development, DECE staff supports, resources and materials, and other types of supports.

INTRODUCTION

In preparation for *the Pre-K for All* expansion, the DOE greatly expanded its internal capacity to provide a wide range of supports—including logistical, compliance-based, instructional, behavioral, and family-focused supports—to sites that operated a full-day pre-K program in 2014–15. The supports provided are described below.

- Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) coaches/instructional coordinators (from here on referred to as DECE coaches), who worked primarily in NYCEECs in 2014–15, provided support for site leaders, individual coaching and group trainings for teachers, and materials and resources. Beginning in January 2015, DECE social workers also provided support to a subset of district schools. DECE coaches modeled instructional strategies, supported classroom arrangement, provided articles and templates related to open-ended questioning and purposeful play, and facilitated training sessions to groups of teachers related to effective implementation of center time and other components of *Pre-K for All* instruction. All sites received at least three visits from their DECE coach over the course of the year.
- DECE social workers, who worked primarily in district schools in 2014–15, provided supports for site leaders, staff, and families, as well as materials and resources. During weekly site visits, their role included observations and consultations, coaching and modeling, facilitating workshops, building families' knowledge and skills, and connecting families to social service resources. Beginning in late February 2015, DECE social workers also provided support to a subset of NYCEECs, working primarily with site leaders to strengthen family engagement and behavioral support at the program through capacity building. Beginning in January 2015, DECE provided explicit specialized training for social workers in this area of capacity building.
- DOE facilitated professional development in the form of a 2-day Summer Institute and four additional citywide professional development sessions during the 2014–15 school year for all *Pre-K for All* lead teachers and teacher assistants. Staff from the sites also may have received other trainings provided by DOE, DOE partners, and other external partners, as well as trainings facilitated by site or program staff.
- Sites had access to a number of resources provided by DOE, including materials available on the DECE website and TeachNYCPre-K.org; programmatic assessments, reports, and resources, such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, used only in NYCEECs); and webinars and trainings, as well as a hotline through a collaboration with New York University to prepare and support sites in using authentic assessments.
- Programmatic and operational supports for site leaders included citywide director meetings (NYCEECs only), communications from DOE central office staff, and operational support from DOE field offices.
- More than 90 percent of instructional staff reported receiving support and feedback from their administrators and participating in staff meetings at their sites.

MOST USED AND MOST HELPFUL TYPES OF SUPPORTS

Survey findings offer an overall view of the use and perceptions of the various types of supports provided or available to program sites, based on the responses of site leaders, teachers, and teacher assistants. **A majority of site leaders and instructional staff reported receiving or using each type of**

support, and a majority of each group of respondents also indicated that each type of support was *moderately or very helpful*.

SITES' USE AND PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORTS

Professional Development

Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) reported that they or their lead teachers or teacher assistants participated in the DOE-sponsored quarterly training that took place during the year. In addition, most sites also reported participating in other types of training provided by DOE or by DOE partners (63 percent), by an external partner (60 percent), and/or site or program staff (85 percent). Instructional staff responses were consistent with what site leaders reported.

The teachers enjoyed [the quarterly PD] because they go in as a team, so it's not only the teacher it's also the teaching assistant...this way they hear the same message, so it's not left to interpretation. So, then they can understand each other and they can work together.

Pre-K Site Leader

Overall, the large majority of site leaders and instructional staff (80 percent or more) found each of these professional development opportunities to be *moderately helpful or very helpful*. Among site leaders, the most helpful trainings were reported to be those provided by external partners hired directly by the sites. Among instructional staff, the most helpful trainings were the quarterly DOE trainings, other training provided by DOE or DOE partners, and training provided by site-based staff.

Interview findings confirm that site staff felt the DOE-sponsored professional development—including the Summer Institute and the sessions offered during the school year—were particularly helpful in preparing sites to implement *Pre-K for All*. In particular, teachers agreed that the DOE trainings presented them with ideas that they have used in their classrooms and were more engaging than training provided in previous years.

Largely satisfied with the professional development that they received, sites also identified some areas of need. Specifically, staff indicated in the surveys they would benefit from additional professional development on working with students who have behavioral challenges, linguistically diverse students, and students with disabilities.

DECE Staff Supports

DECE coaches and social workers were the frontline of DOE support to the sites during the first year of *Pre-K for All* implementation.

Results indicate that instructional staff received various types of support from the DECE coaches, including in-class support (86 percent), materials and resources (85 percent), and group trainings (84 percent). In addition, three-quarters of site leaders (75 percent) also received one-on-one assistance from their DECE coaches.¹

More than three-fourths of instructional staff indicated that the support they received from their DECE coach was moderately or very helpful.

¹ From September 2014 to January 2015, social workers supported district schools, and DECE coaches supported NYCEECs. As a result, district schools did not begin receiving supports from DECE coaches until February 2015 and may not have received their first visit before the survey was conducted.

Overall, sites found the support from DECE coaches to be very valuable. Most site leaders (83 percent) reported that the one-on-one support they received from the DECE coach was *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. The large majority of instructional staff also reported that the group trainings, in-class support, and materials and resources were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (82 percent, 80 percent, and 81 percent, respectively). Interviewed teachers described how DECE coaches helped them strengthen their practice in a number of different ways, including improving classroom setup and organization; classroom management; and providing guidance on instructional planning and delivery, including lesson planning, pacing, and transitions.

Following a weekly site visit model, DECE social workers provided a wide range of supports to the district schools with which they worked. The majority of district site leaders reported that the DECE social workers provided supports for families (93 percent), materials and resources (91 percent), and support for administrators (84 percent). The large majority of instructional staff at those sites also reported receiving coaching, observations, and feedback from a DECE social worker (91 percent), as well as materials and resources (85 percent).

Staff from district school sites reported that they were generally satisfied with the supports they received from the DECE social worker. Approximately three-quarters of site leaders described each type of support their site received from social workers as *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. Similar proportions of instructional staff reported that the coaching, observations, and feedback from the DECE social workers, as well as the materials and resources they had received through them, were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. During interviews, site leaders and staff described how the social workers provided valuable support, serving as a liaison among teachers, parents, and administrators in identifying student needs and facilitating the procedures for addressing those needs. In addition, the DECE social workers supported families in navigating the process for evaluating children for special education services through the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process and developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Resources and Materials

Sites used a variety of resources and materials to support implementation. Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) reported that their site used the resources available on the DECE website. Interviews corroborated this finding. Site leaders and teachers used the website to access units of study and lesson plans, and guidelines for the daily schedule, among other resources, and found the website to be useful. In addition, most sites reported using programmatic assessments, reports, and resources, such as the CLASS (used by NYCEECs only in 2014–15) and ECERS-R (90 percent); accessing the resources on TeachNYCPre-K.org (86 percent); and contacting the authentic assessment hotline (71 percent).

Sites found these resources and materials useful, in particular the Web-based supports. The majority of site leaders found the Web-based supports to be *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*, including the DECE website (81 percent) and TeachNYCPre-K.org (75 percent). Site leaders also reported that they were satisfied with the programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (72 percent).

Perceptions of the usefulness of the authentic assessment hotline varied by site type. Approximately two-thirds of the leaders of the DOE NYCEECs and district schools who reported using the authentic assessment hotline found it *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (69 percent and 62 percent, respectively), 44 percent of ACS NYCEEC site leaders agreed. It should be noted that many ACS-contracted sites have been using the Teaching Strategies GOLD authentic assessment system for many years, whereas many of the DOE-contracted sites using the Work Sampling System have only recently begun using it.

Other Supports for Site Leaders

Nearly all site leaders reported that they had obtained support from the DOE central office (94 percent), and almost all site leaders from NYCEECs indicated that they had attended citywide director meetings (98 percent).

Site leaders reported that they were satisfied with the programmatic and operational support they received. The majority of site leaders reported that the support they received from their field office (81 percent) and through the citywide director meetings (74 percent) as well as the communications they received from the DOE central office (69 percent) were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*.

Site Support for Instructional Staff

Across the *Pre-K for All* sites, most instructional staff reported receiving support during staff meetings (95 percent) and from administrators (93 percent). Staff reported that they were largely satisfied with both forms of support. Over 80 percent of staff found administrator feedback (83 percent) and staff meetings (83 percent) to be *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*.

CONCLUSION

Overall, *Pre-K for All* sites used a wide range of program supports to aid them in implementing their instructional programs and, on the whole, found them to be helpful. The survey and interview responses point to several suggestions for improving these supports. These include:

- Increase or expand the support from DECE coaches and social workers, each of which were reported to be very helpful for both site leaders and teachers. (It should be noted that the DOE has hired additional staff to support the Year 2 expansion efforts.)
- Enhance the usefulness of the citywide director meetings by designating portions of the meetings for topics that are specific to new site leaders. In addition, ensure that the meetings include content that adequately addresses the needs and concerns of the more experienced site leaders. For example, provide a forum for experienced site leaders to share best practices with one another. In addition, continue to provide opportunities for more experienced site leaders to share practices with less experienced site leaders.
- Provide additional professional development for instructional staff on strategies for working with students who have behavioral challenges, linguistically diverse students, and students with disabilities.
- Ensure that the DOE-sponsored or facilitated professional development is appropriate for staff at all experience levels and that the content of the trainings does not repeat what staff may have already received.
- Continue to populate the DECE website with a range of programmatic and instructional guidelines and resources, as sites found this form of support particularly useful.

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *Which supports do sites use the most? And which supports are most helpful?*
2. *How are sites using the supports? Are there differences by site type and program length? How could they be improved?*

Westat and Metis are conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the *Pre-K for All* initiative in New York City to assess the implementation and outcomes of this effort. The implementation study consists of an ongoing assessment of New York City's *Pre-K for All* expansion efforts, both in terms of processes, structures, and policies that are in place to support and monitor the rapid expansion, as well as on-the-ground program implementation and delivery. Results from this study will help identify successful practices, challenges, and areas for growth.

The implementation study uses multiple methods and data sources, including interviews with key agency stakeholders; a survey of staff of the NYC Department of Education (DOE) Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE); surveys of site leaders, instructional staff, and families at a sample of sites and interviews with site leaders and staff at a sub-sample of these sites; and a review of documentation. The evaluation instruments were developed by Westat/Metis in collaboration with staff of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and DOE.

This report presents implementation findings on the use and perceptions of program supports.

Findings are based on self-reported survey and interview responses from site administrators and instructional staff, as well as a review of documentation provided by DOE. The program sites included in the study were sampled to be representative of all *Pre-K for All* sites and recruited to participate in the evaluation. A total of 201 sites agreed to participate in various aspects of the study, with 40 agreeing to site visits.

- From March through June 2015, Westat/Metis administered an **online survey² to site leaders and instructional staff** (teachers and teacher assistants). A total of 183 site leaders responded, for a response rate of 91 percent. The response rate for instructional staff was 69 percent ($N = 742$) based on email addresses provided for 1,080 staff at the selected sites.
- **Site visits** were conducted at 40 programs from March to May 2015. In-depth interviews with site leaders and interviews or focus groups with instructional staff were conducted at each of these sites.

In addition to presenting survey and interview findings across all study sites, selected data are reported for the following subgroups of programs and respondents:

- **Site type.** This includes three categories, two of which include programs known as New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) operated by independent organizations under contract to DOE (DOE NYCEECs) or ACS (ACS NYCEECs). The third category is district schools. Because of the small sample size, results for charter schools are not presented separately, but are included in the aggregate.
- **Program length.** All *Pre-K for All* sites operate full-day programs. In this report, sites are categorized as: "existing or expanded" (full-day program that maintained their same size enrollment or

² To increase response rates, paper surveys were mailed to nonrespondents in June 2015.

expanded the number of seats), “conversion” (programs that converted from a half- to a full-day), and “new or newly contracted” (district schools or NYCEECs operating a pre-K program for the first time as well as programs in existence for various lengths of time prior to contracting with the DOE or ACS).

- **Staff position.** This includes site leaders (i.e., school administrators or site directors), lead teachers, and teacher assistants who may be teacher aides or paraprofessionals.

See Appendix Table A-1 for the distribution of sites that participated in the study.

The types of supports provided or available to the sites include professional development; support from DECE staff; resources and materials; other supports for site leaders; and supports provided by the sites, themselves, to instructional staff. The main sources of support are summarized below.

- In the summer of 2014, the DOE contracted with Bank Street College to provide a two-day **Summer Institute** for all staff. The training covered a wide range of topics, including developmentally appropriate practice and principles, welcoming children and families, setting up centers, engaging children in learning, and supporting children with developmental variation. New or newly contracted sites received additional training over the summer, mostly focused on getting them ready to open and operational and compliance issues (e.g., using Pre-KIDS data system, enrollment procedures, invoicing).
- Throughout the year, **four citywide professional development sessions** were offered in partnership with external vendors Benchmark Education, LitLife, and Bank Street College. The topics of the four sessions were: Engaging All Learners with Interactive Read-Alouds, Pre-K Success for Linguistically Diverse Learners, Culturally Responsive Practice, and Transitions. In addition, the DOE provided training for site leaders in 2014–15.
- **DECE coaches or instructional coordinators (from here on referred to as DECE coaches)**, based out of the DOE field offices, provided a wide range of direct supports to sites through ongoing communication and site visits. The nature of the supports included modeling instructional strategies, supporting room arrangement, providing articles and templates related to open-ended questioning and purposeful play, and providing training to teachers on the effective implementation of key components of *Pre-K for All* instruction. To assist with the first year’s expansion efforts, the DOE increased the number of DECE coaches from approximately 30 to 70.
- Sites received individualized support from **DECE social workers** on family engagement, social-emotional development, and behavioral management. During the 2014–15 school year, the role of the social worker was to build the capacity of *Pre-K for All* programs to provide a socially and emotionally safe learning environment for children and empower families to support their children’s education in pre-K and beyond. In 2014–15, DECE social workers were assigned primarily to district schools.³ Following a weekly site visit model, their work included observations and consultations, coaching and modeling of developmentally appropriate adult-child interactions, facilitating workshops, building trusting relationships and families’ knowledge and skills to support children’s learning and development, and connecting families to social service resources. Beginning in late February 2015, DECE social workers were also assigned, on a limited basis, to a subset of NYCEECs following a leadership resourcing model, where they worked directly with site leaders to strengthen family engagement and behavioral support through capacity-building visits, phone conversations, and email communications. Because the NYCEECs did not begin to receive services from DECE social

³ In 2014–15 DECE social workers worked primarily with district schools as they had been assigned to those sites in prior years.

workers until February 2015 or later, survey results concerning this type of support are presented only for respondents from the district schools.

- Sites had access to various **resources and materials**, including those available online on the DECE website and on TeachNYCPre-K.org. Sites may have also used programmatic assessments, reports, and resources, such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, used only in NYCEECs in 2014–15); participated in webinars and trainings on how to use the authentic assessments; and/or contacted the hotline established by DOE to provide sites with additional support in this area.
- The **DECE Field Operations team** was responsible for managing contractual relationships with the DOE NYCEECs and providing logistical support in the areas of contracting, budgeting, and compliance. Site directors from NYCEECs also participated in regularly scheduled **citywide director meetings**.
- **ACS provided supports to the ACS NYCEECs**. For example, these sites received field visits and support from the ACS Program Development Unit on topics such as program management, students with disabilities, family and community engagement, and health and mental hygiene. In addition, ACS offered a number of training opportunities based on sites' annual self-assessments. Topics for the 2014–15 school year included child development, developmental assessments, emotional well-being, and school readiness. Trainings were organized for clusters of sites based on similar needs and/or geography. Finally, ACS NYCEECs also participated in bimonthly citywide director meetings, mostly focused on policy and procedures, and smaller, borough-wide meetings, which allowed for more interaction and peer learning and sharing. ACS team leaders and consultants typically support much larger numbers of sites and, as a result, offer different types of support.⁴

THE MOST USED AND MOST HELPFUL TYPES OF SUPPORTS

Survey findings offer an overall view of the use and perceptions of the various types of supports provided or available to program sites, based on the responses of site leaders, teachers, and teacher assistants. Site leaders were asked, *How helpful have the following activities and resources been in supporting your site's efforts to develop and implement a high-quality full-day pre-K program?* Instructional staff were asked, *How helpful have the following activities and resources been in supporting your efforts to deliver a high-quality pre-K experience to your students?*

A majority of site leaders and instructional staff reported receiving or using each type of support, and a majority of each group of respondents also indicated that each type of support was *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. The supports reported to be most used by each group of respondents are listed below.

Site leaders:

- Various supports from DECE social workers (district schools only, 90 to 100 percent);
- Citywide director meetings for NYCEEC site leaders (98 percent);
- Quarterly DOE-sponsored professional development sessions (96 percent);
- DECE website resources (96 percent);
- Communications from DOE central office staff (94 percent);
- Operational support from a field office (NYCEECs only, 91 percent); and

⁴ It should be noted that there are ongoing efforts to align key support messages between ACS and DOE, including the joint development of the *Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards.

- Programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (90 percent).

At least two-thirds of the site leaders indicated that these most-used supports were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. Although they were not in the top most-used supports, professional development provided by external vendors and by program or site staff had the highest percentages of site leaders who perceived the support to be *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* for developing and implementing a high-quality program (91 percent and 90 percent, respectively).

Teachers:

- Onsite staff meetings (96 percent);
- Quarterly DOE-sponsored professional development sessions (96 percent);
- DECE social worker (district schools only, 94 percent);
- Administrator feedback (94 percent);
- Resources from DECE website (93 percent);
- Programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (93 percent); and
- DECE social worker materials (district schools only, 90 percent).

Similar to the site leader findings, at least two-thirds of the teachers using these supports rated them as *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. Among them, onsite staff meetings and administrator feedback garnered the highest percentage of teachers (82 percent each) indicating *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. The other types of supports reported to be used by slightly fewer respondents, but highly rated as *moderately to very helpful* by those respondents were professional development by DOE or DOE partner (80 percent), various supports from the DECE coach (78 to 79 percent), and professional development provided by program or site staff (78 percent) or by an external partner (77 percent).

Teacher assistants:

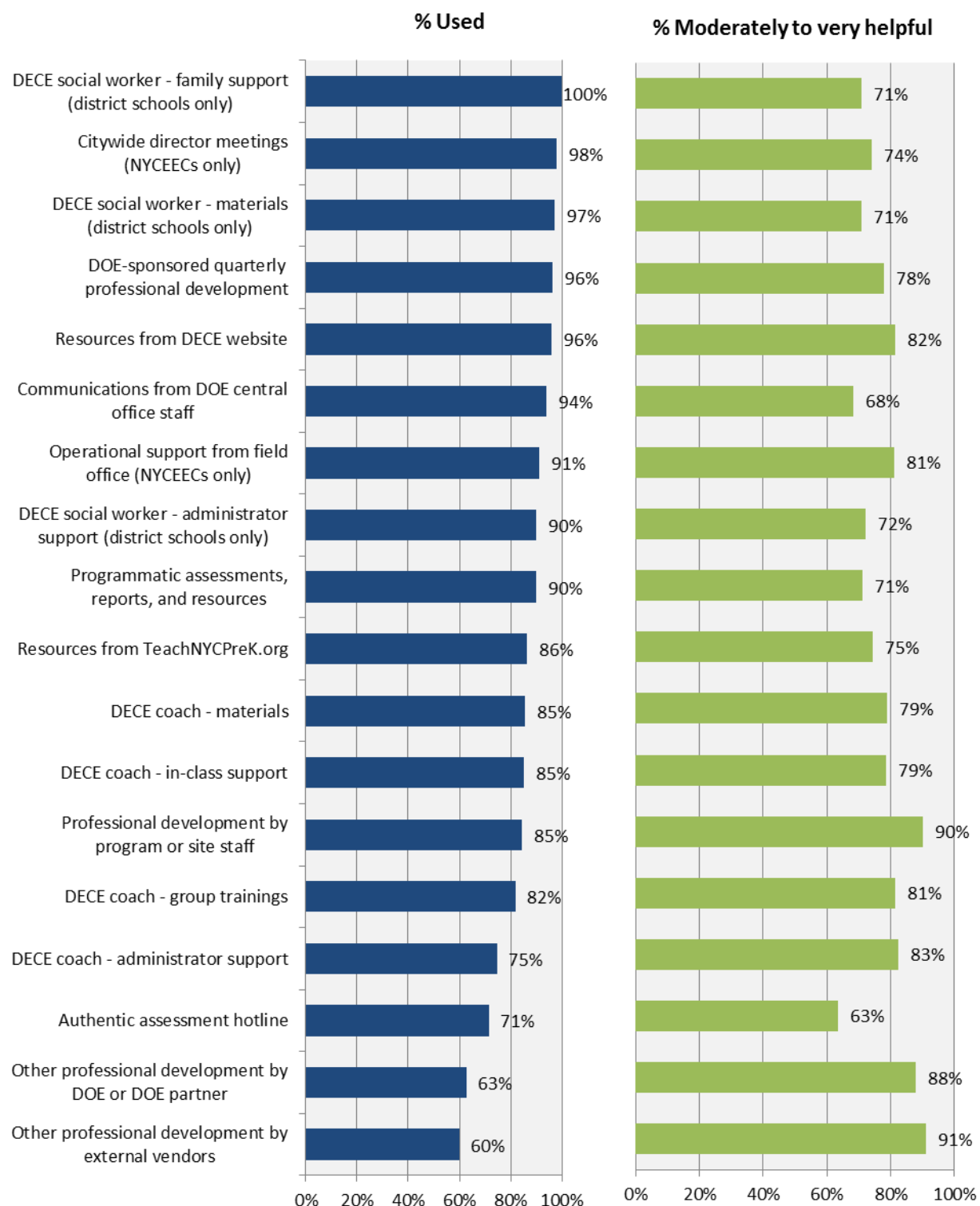
- Onsite staff meetings (94 percent); and
- Administrator feedback (92 percent).

The highest rated supports, as measured by the percentage of teacher assistants rating them as *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*, were the quarterly DOE-sponsored professional development opportunities (91 percent), the DECE coach group trainings (88 percent), administrator feedback (86 percent), professional development provided by program staff or site staff (85 percent), and DECE website resources (85 percent).

When **examining the survey results by respondent group, several noteworthy differences emerge**. For example, teacher assistants were more likely than lead teachers to report the usefulness of several supports, including the DOE-sponsored opportunities (91 percent of teacher assistants compared to 74 percent of teachers reported that these were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*) and Summer Institute (83 percent compared to 69 percent) and programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (80 percent compared to 67 percent). Furthermore, while more than 90 percent of site leaders reported that professional development opportunities provided by site staff or by non-DOE external vendors were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (90 percent and 91 percent, respectively), smaller proportions of teachers responded this way (78 percent and 77 percent, respectively). Complete survey results⁵ are presented in Figure 1 (site leaders), Figure 2 (teachers), and Figure 3 (teacher assistants).

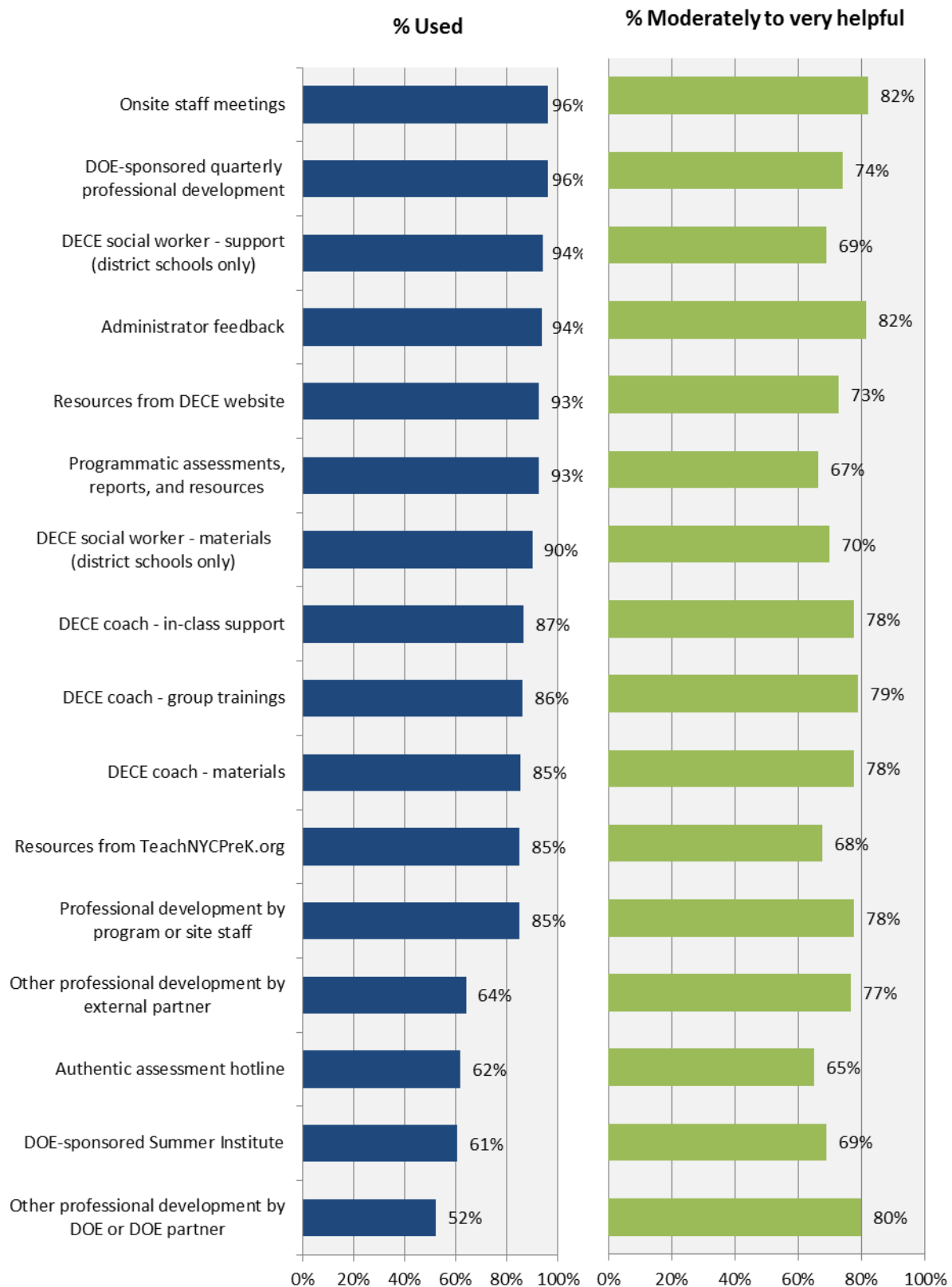
⁵ Response options for extent of helpfulness included *not helpful*, *a little helpful*, *moderately helpful*, and *very helpful*.

Figure 1. Use and Perceptions of Supports* by Site Leaders



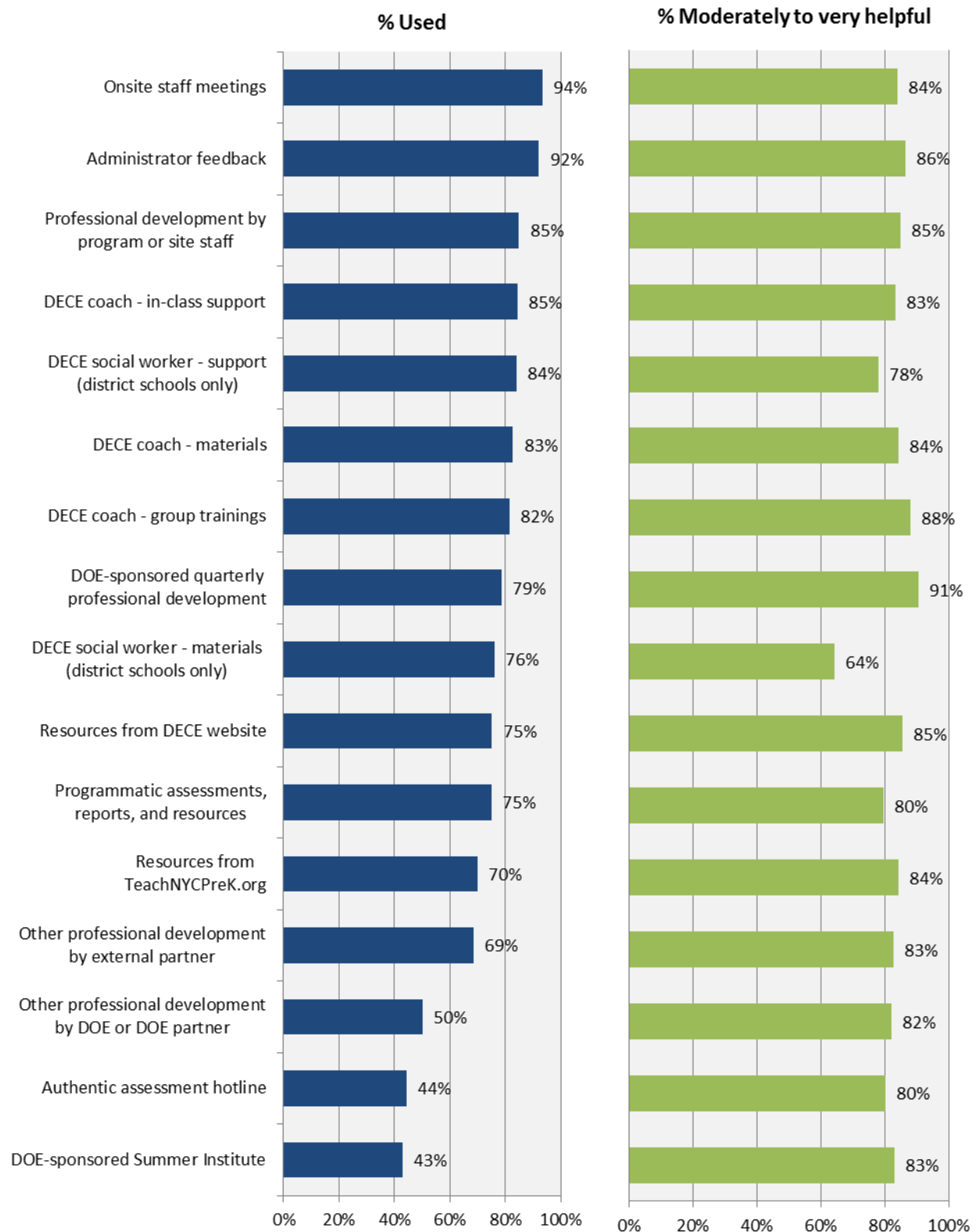
* Item wording: *How helpful have the following activities and resources been in supporting your site's efforts to develop and implement a high-quality full-day pre-K program?*

Figure 2. Use and Perceptions of Supports* by Teachers



* Item wording: *How helpful have the following activities and resources been in supporting your efforts to deliver a high-quality pre-K experience to their students?*

Figure 3. Use and Perceptions of Supports* by Teacher Assistants



* Item wording: *How helpful have the following activities and resources been in supporting your efforts to deliver a high-quality pre-K experience to their students?*

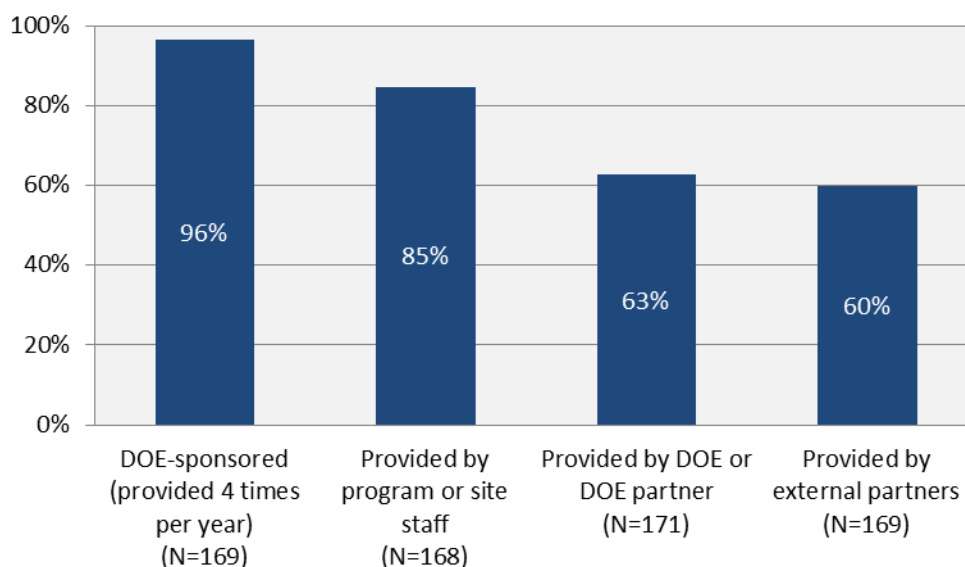
SITES' USE AND PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORTS

The discussion of use and perceptions of the different types of program supports is presented in five sections: professional development supports, DECE staff supports, resources and materials, operational and programmatic supports for site leaders, and supports provided by the sites to their own instructional staff.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

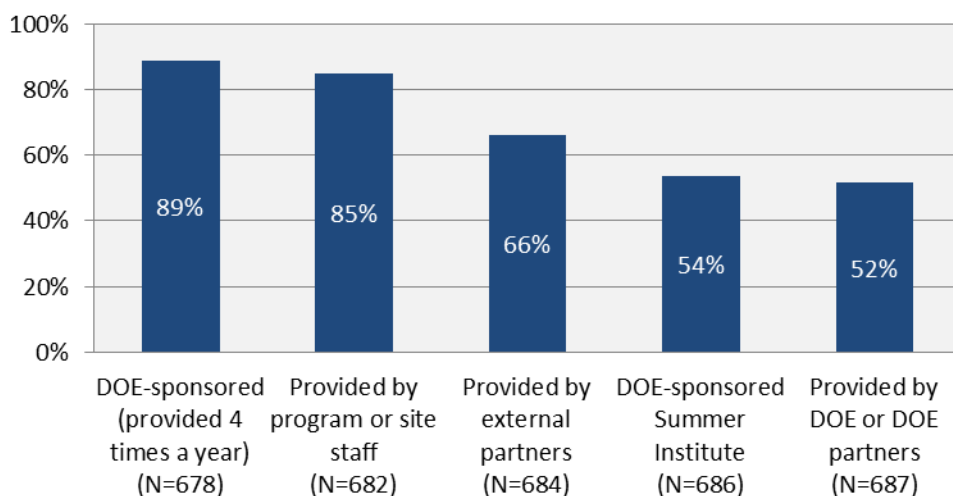
Nearly all sites participated in the four DOE-sponsored trainings that took place during the year (96 percent), as shown in Figure 4. In addition, approximately two-thirds of site leaders reported that they or their staff received other training provided by DOE or by DOE partners (63 percent) or by an external partner (60 percent). In addition, most sites indicated that they participated in training that was provided by site or program staff (85 percent).

Figure 4. Site Leaders' Reports of Site Participation in Professional Development



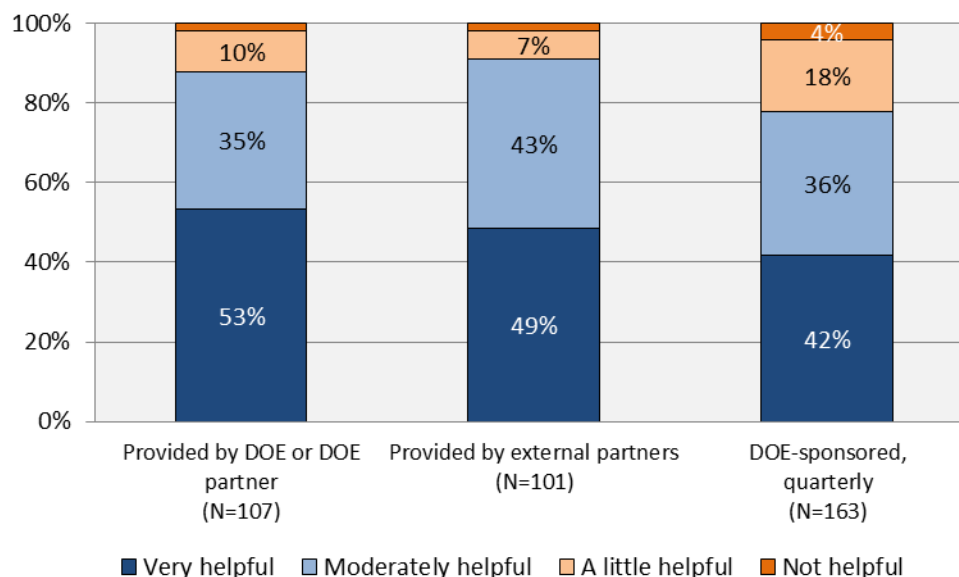
Instructional staff responses are consistent with what site leaders reported. As shown in Figure 5, the large majority of lead teachers and teacher assistants participated in the quarterly DOE trainings (89 percent), while approximately half took advantage of other DOE-sponsored professional development opportunities, including other training provided by DOE staff or partners (52 percent) and the DOE-sponsored Summer Institute (54 percent). Most staff indicated that they participated in training facilitated by staff at their site (85 percent). In addition, two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) participated in professional development provided by external partners, which might include community-based organizations and institutions of higher education.

Figure 5. Instructional Staff's Participation in Professional Development



The professional development that was provided was helpful in supporting their site's efforts to implement a high quality pre-K program, according to site leaders. Most reported that the training provided by DOE or DOE partners (88 percent) and external partners (92 percent) was *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. Site leaders also indicated that they were satisfied with the quarterly DOE-sponsored trainings, with more than three-quarters of respondents (78 percent) indicating that they were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*.

Figure 6. Site Leaders' Perceptions of Professional Development

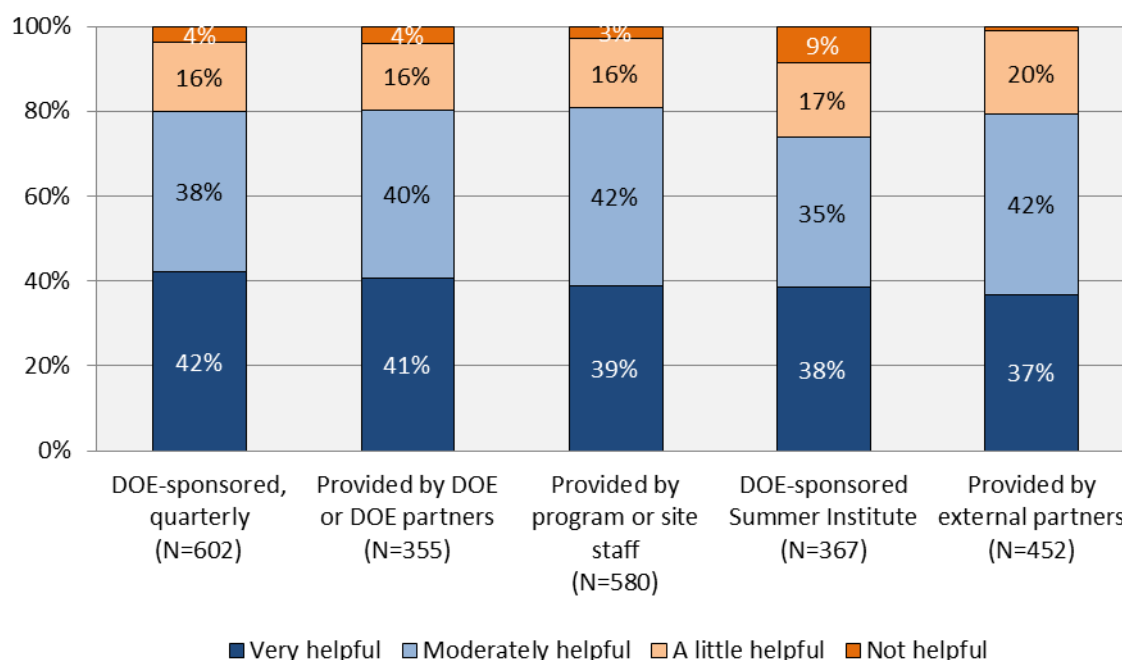


Note: Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

Instructional staff also indicated that they were satisfied with the training they received to support them in their role. As shown in Figure 7, approximately three-quarters of staff indicated that the various types of training were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*, including quarterly DOE trainings (80 percent),

DOE-sponsored Summer Institute (73 percent), and other training provided by DOE or DOE partners (81 percent) as well as training provided by site staff (81 percent) or external partners (79 percent).

Figure 7. Instructional Staff's Perceptions of Professional Development



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding. Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

Instructional staff's perceptions of the helpfulness of professional development opportunities were examined by years of experience (one to two years, three to five years, and six or more years). Findings do not reveal any notable differences between the three groups, indicating that the more experienced and less experienced staff found this form of support to be equally or similarly helpful.

Interview findings suggest that the DOE-sponsored professional development—including the Summer Institute and the quarterly training—were helpful in preparing sites to implement *Pre-K for All*. The majority of interviewed site leaders indicated that their staff were satisfied with the Summer Institute. One site leader noted how the training was helpful in preparing to meet the *Pre-K for All* requirements: "It pretty much broke down how the new *Pre-K for All* schedule would be run. We received a booklet with the schedule, [as well as] newsletters, [and strategies for] how to talk to parents."

Instructional staff offered similar feedback about the usefulness of the Summer Institute. Teachers from several sites expressed satisfaction with the sessions, noting that they were "helpful," "beneficial," and "tied in everything" that they needed to know to implement *Pre-K for All*. For example, staff explained that the sessions provided useful information on setting up the classroom, as well as information about cultural diversity and literacy instruction.

Overall, they enjoyed [the Summer Institute]. They like the camaraderie and the collaboration with other teachers. And I think they feel very supported by DOE.

Pre-K Site Leader

The feedback on the Summer Institute was largely positive, but several respondents felt the sessions were more beneficial for new teachers. In the words of one site leader, "...for new teachers the

[Summer Institute] was helpful, but...my seasoned teachers thought it was stuff they already knew." Several teachers commented on this issue, noting that a lot of the information discussed was "basic" and that the training may have been more useful if staff were grouped by experience level, at least for a portion of the sessions. However, some teachers indicated that having participants with different experience levels work together encouraged the sharing of ideas.

With regard to the DOE-sponsored professional development offered throughout the year, site leaders and staff expressed that this training was helpful and provided them with information and materials that they could use to improve their practice. In particular, **most interviewed teachers reported that the DOE trainings were beneficial, presented them with good ideas that they have used in their classrooms, and were more engaging than training provided in previous years.** A number of teachers liked the half-day schedule of the sessions, rather than the full days that had been offered in the past. In addition, DOE sites appreciated that the sessions were offered on days when students are not in school, making it easier for more staff to attend. A site director explained the benefit of having teachers and teacher assistants attending the sessions together: "The teachers enjoyed it because they go in as a team, so it's not only the teacher it's also the teaching assistant...this way they hear the same message, so it's not left to interpretation. So, then they can understand each other, and they can work together."

As with the Summer Institute, sites felt the trainings were targeted toward new teachers and included some information that was redundant for teachers with a lot of experience. This sentiment was expressed by approximately half of the interviewed site directors as well as a number of teachers. Yet, some respondents did not view this as a weakness, acknowledging that all training is helpful, even if it serves as refresher or provides an opportunity to collaborate with other educators. In the words of one experienced teacher, "I like to get new ideas when I go to these meetings. There are always younger teachers [there] who...have such vibrant ideas and I like [that]. I'm teaching a long time now. I try to change it up. I don't like teaching the same thing every year." Furthermore, more than half of interviewed teachers and a few site directors found the quality of the training inconsistent from session to session, commenting that there was some duplication in the content between the sessions.

When asked for suggestions of additional topics that they would like the trainings to cover, teachers from a number of sites recommended professional development on strategies for handling behavior challenges in the classroom and working with linguistically diverse students and students with disabilities in integrated classes. Another recommendation provided by a few sites was for the training facilitators to provide examples of how to implement the strategies in the classroom. As one respondent described, "I think you need to have theory with application...I think that's one of the things that is lacking [in] some of this professional development. Yeah, you sit and you learn, but then there's no exact framework on how to incorporate it in your class every day."

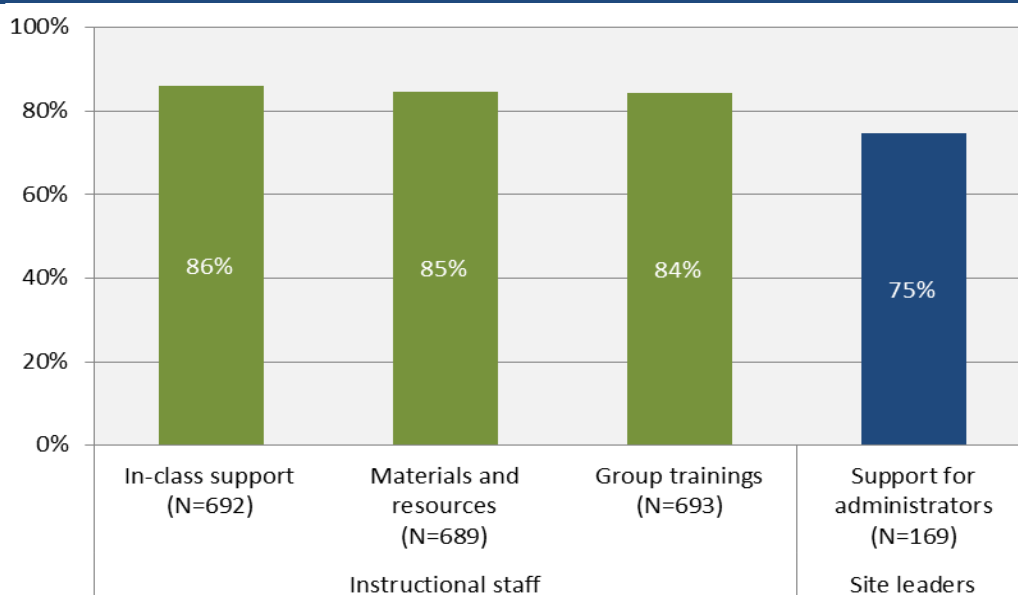
In addition to the DOE-sponsored training, a few sites reported holding their own professional development sessions on topics such as behavior management, family communication, and community building. Some district school staff reported that professional development sessions were generally schoolwide and offered little information that was relevant at the pre-K level, but other sites offered sessions specific to pre-K or pre-K and kindergarten, combined.

DECE STAFF SUPPORTS

DECE Coaches

In 2014–15, the DOE increased the number of DECE coaches from 32 to 72 in order to provide individualized supports to sites and assist with the first year’s expansion efforts. As shown in Figure 8, **the large majority of instructional staff received a wide range of supports from DECE coaches**, including in-class support (86 percent), materials and resources (85 percent), and group trainings (84 percent). Three-quarters of site leaders (75 percent) also reported receiving one-on-one assistance from a DECE coach.

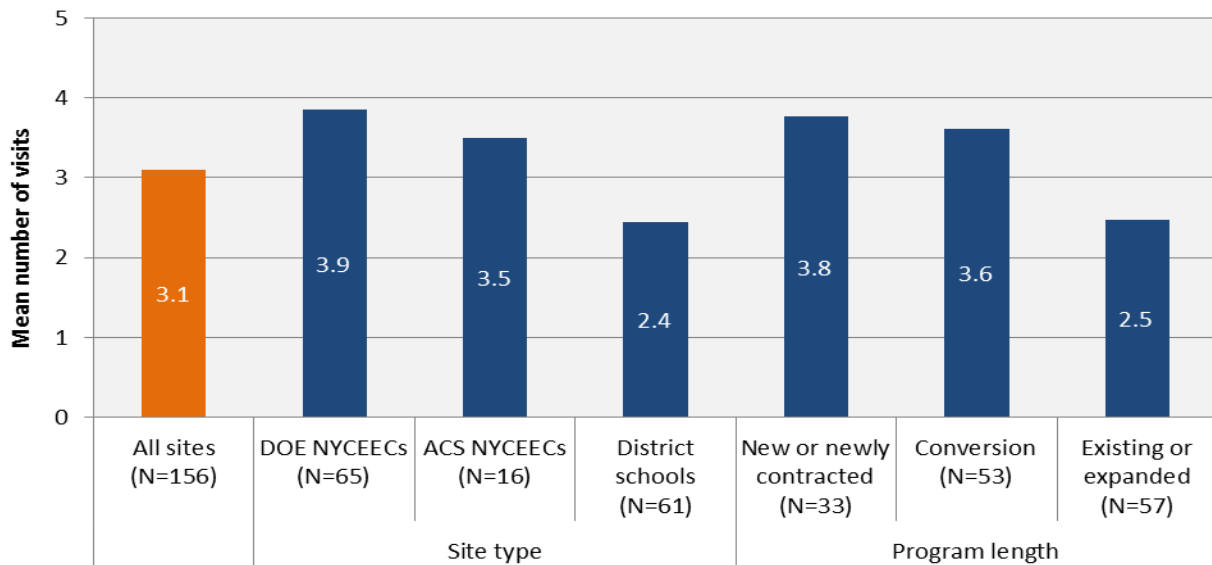
Figure 8. Types of Supports Provided by DECE Coaches, Reported by Site Leaders and Instructional Staff



Site leaders also reported on the frequency with which the DECE coach visited their pre-K sites in 2014–15. Sites were expected to receive three visits from a coach during the 2014–15 school year; for a variety of reasons, some may have received more than three visits, and some may have received less.⁶ As shown in Figure 9, sites reported receiving an average of three visits from a DECE coach. **The DOE and ACS NYCEECs reported more visits from their DECE coach than the district schools.** According to survey responses, DOE NYCEECs averaged almost 4 visits (3.9) and ACS NYCEECs averaged 3.5 visits, while district schools averaged 2.4 visits. In addition, the **new or newly contracted and conversion sites were visited by their DECE coach more frequently than existing or expanded sites** (3.8 and 3.6 compared to 2.5).

⁶ It is likely that not all sites had received all of their visits by the time they completed the survey, or there were other extenuating circumstances (e.g., site closures) that affected the number of visits reported and, thus, the averages.

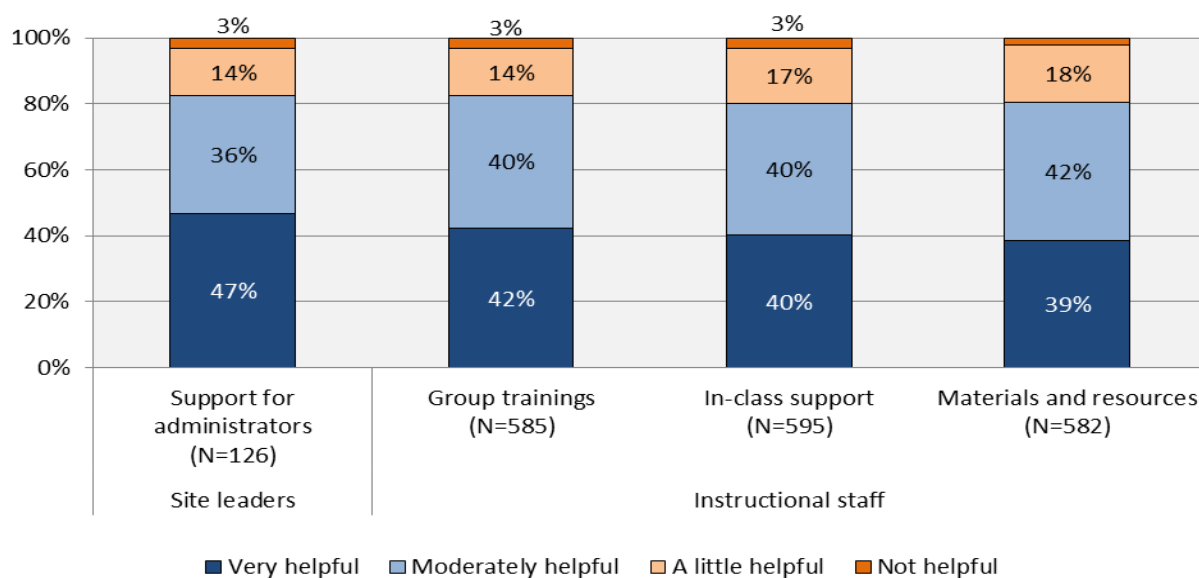
Figure 9. Average Number of DECE Coach Visits, Based on Site Leaders' Reports, by Site Type and Program Length



Overall, site staff found the support from DECE coaches to be valuable.

- Most site leaders (83 percent) reported that the one-on-one support they received from the DECE coach was *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (Figure 10).
- Instructional staff also indicated that the DECE coach helped support them in their role. More than three-quarters indicated that the group trainings, in-class support, and materials and resources provided by the DECE coach were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (82 percent, 80 percent, and 81 percent, respectively).

Figure 10. Site Leaders' and Instructional Staff's Perceptions of Supports from DECE Coaches



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding. Percentages of less than 3 percent are not labeled.

Instructional staff's perceptions of the helpfulness of the supports provided by the DECE coaches were examined by site type, program length, and staff's years of experience. Findings do not reveal any notable differences by subgroups.

Consistent with survey results, the interview findings also indicate that **many of the sites found the support from DECE coaches to be beneficial to delivering pre-K instruction and that they would welcome more of this support.** DECE coaches met with site leaders to learn about their site's needs and challenges and to develop a plan for providing support. While onsite, the DECE coaches conducted classroom observations and met with teachers to provide guidance, training, and resources in response to their needs. A number of site leaders and teachers also shared that they communicated with their DECE coaches by email and phone between visits and felt the coaches were both accessible and responsive.

Interviewed staff reported how DECE coaches helped them strengthen their practice in a number of different ways, for example, improving classroom setup and organization and providing guidance on instructional planning and delivery, including lesson planning, pacing, and transitions. Classroom management support, in particular how to handle challenging behavioral issues and support related to authentic assessments and programmatic assessments, were also noted as areas in which the DECE coaches provided support. Teachers, who indicated that they were particularly satisfied with this type of support, found it helpful when their DECE coach provided feedback based on classroom observations, especially when the feedback was immediate and in person. As one teacher explained, "She had some great ideas. We just had training with her last week and it was very helpful...I think she gives us good insight on things that we should be teaching the kids."

[Our DECE coach] is amazing, very helpful, very prompt. When you ask her a question, she responds, she cares, she wants to help, and she gives you multiple resources for any question that you ask...if I email her or have any question at all, not only does she respond promptly, but she responds with information that is extremely helpful.... I'm really very happy with the experience.... I appreciate her professionalism.

Pre-K Teacher

However, a few teachers felt the level of support they received from the DECE coach fell short of expectations in terms of feedback. As one teacher explained,

I've received no feedback whatsoever, positive or negative in my classroom.... I just would've appreciated more support from the person who came here in terms of any type of feedback.... I think she was helpful in asking what we needed, but not really the follow through.

Another site's teacher stated that the DECE coach "...came to observe, but she never really met with us to discuss how can we improve. She just came to look around the classroom, but we really never got feedback."

The most common challenge expressed by sites was that they did not receive enough onsite support from their coach. While the site leaders and staff were aware that the DECE coach worked with multiple sites and did not have the capacity to provide more intensive support, they strongly agreed that this would be the best way to improve upon this form of support. They also felt that more time onsite for the DECE coach would lead to more individualized support tailored to teachers' specific needs. As one teacher noted, the support he/she received was "...general feedback. I found it was too general, and I didn't think it really applied to us."

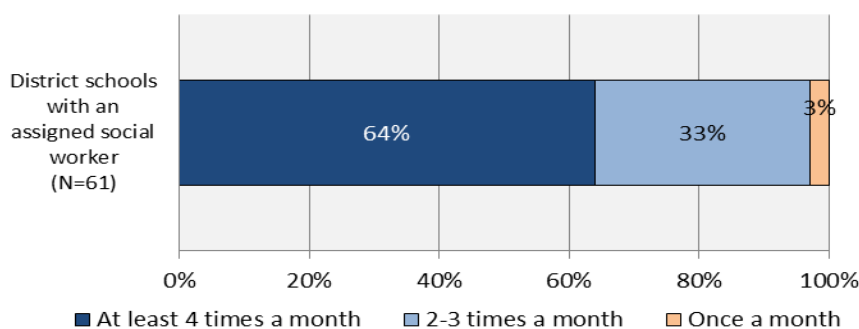
DECE Social Workers

DECE social workers provided support to sites on family engagement, social-emotional development, and behavioral management. Prior to the *Pre-K for All* expansion, DECE social workers visited district schools to provide this support on a weekly or biweekly schedule. With the expansion and increase in the number of programs, the DOE strategized ways to expand social worker supports to NYCEECs. According to DECE, in 2014–15, the delivery of DECE social worker services took three forms.⁷

- The **Standard Model**, implemented throughout the 2014–15 school year, included weekly support of site administrators, teachers, and families. This type of support was provided to about 80 percent of district schools and 3 percent of DOE NYCEECs. No ACS NYCEECs were covered through this model.⁸
- The **Leadership Resourcing Model**, implemented from late February 2015 to the end of the school year, consisted of DECE social workers working directly with site leaders to strengthen family engagement and behavioral support through capacity building. Under this model, the social workers made approximately two to three visits per site, but they also provided additional support via phone and email communications, as needed. This model was implemented in 14 percent of DOE NYCEECs and 21 percent of ACS NYCEECs.⁹
- DECE social workers are deployed as needed in response to specific issues at a program site (“**escalations**”) that come to the attention of the DECE through various channels.

Most site leaders from the district schools that had an assigned DECE social worker reported receiving visits from the social worker. More than two-thirds of the site leaders (64 percent) reported that they were visited by their assigned DECE social worker at least four times each month, and an additional 33 percent received two or three visits each month (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Site Leaders’ Reports of Frequency of DECE Social Worker Visits (District Schools)



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

⁷ Communication from DECE.

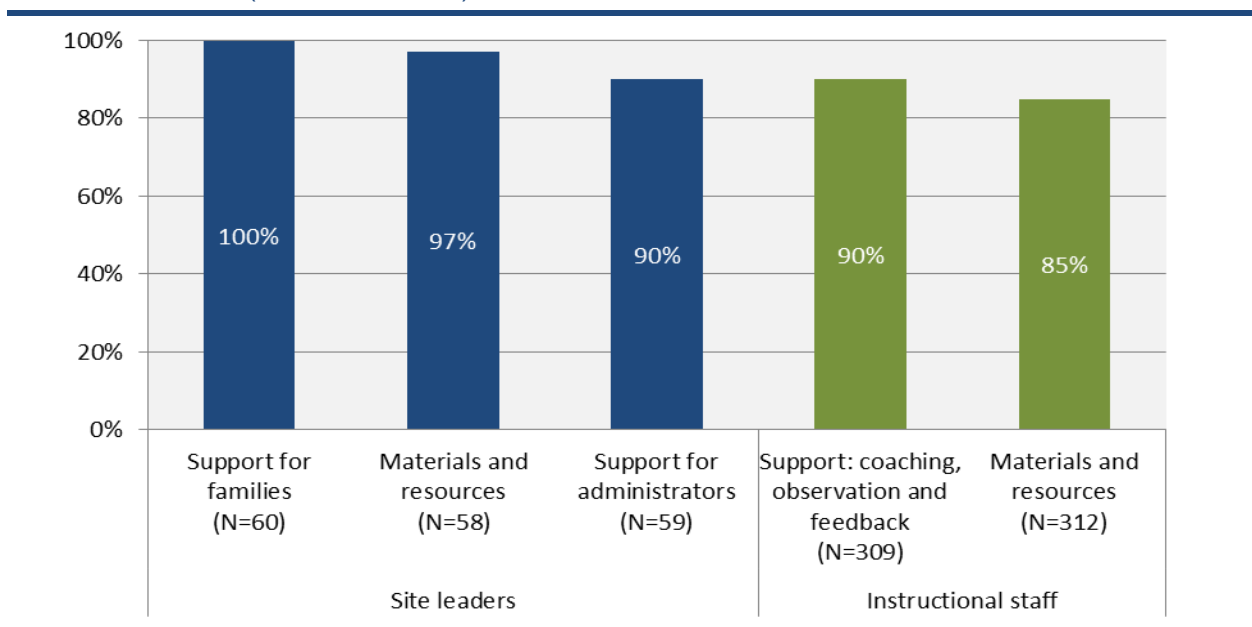
⁸ Data provided by DECE indicated that, among study sites, the large majority (85 percent) of district schools and a small number of DOE NYCEECs (9 percent) received the standard weekly model.

⁹ Data provided by DECE indicated that, among study sample sites, 15 percent of the DOE NYCEECs and 20 percent of ACS NYCEECs received the leadership resourcing model.

Site leaders at district schools reported that the DECE social workers provided a range of supports.

These included supports for families (100 percent), materials and resources (97 percent), and support for administrators (90 percent). As shown in Figure 12, similar proportions of teachers at district school sites reported receiving coaching, observations, and feedback from the DECE social worker (90 percent), as well as materials and resources (85 percent).

Figure 12. Types of Support Provided by DECE Social Workers, Reported by Site Leaders and Instructional Staff (District Schools)



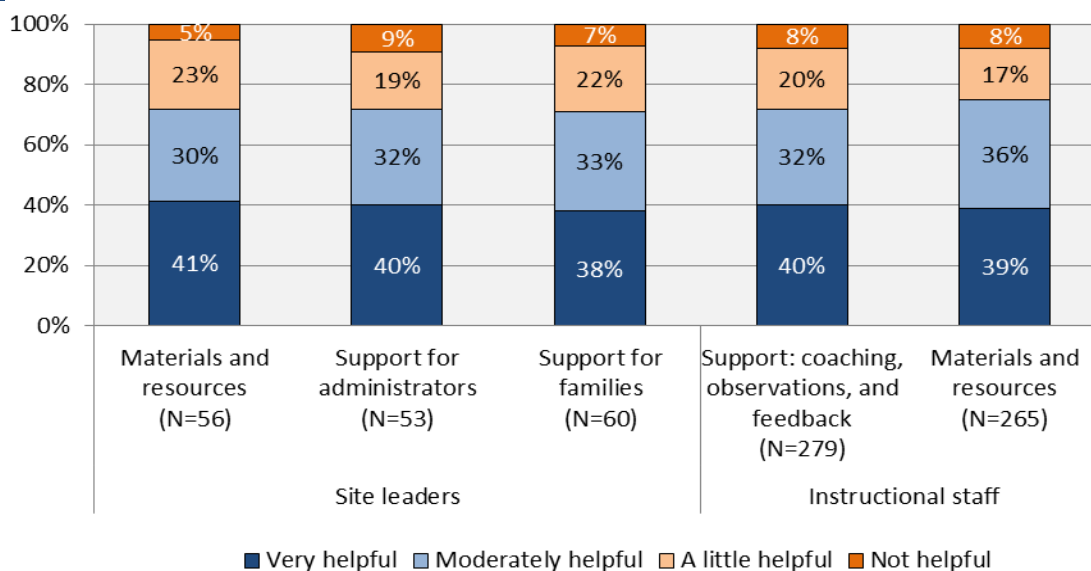
Staff at the district school sites reported that they were generally satisfied with the supports they received from the DECE social worker.

Approximately three-quarters of surveyed site leaders described each type of support their site received from the DECE social workers as *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*. Similar proportions of instructional staff reported that the coaching, observations, and feedback from the DECE social workers, as well as the materials and resources they had received through them, were *moderately* or *very helpful* (Figure 13).

I feel like I have a good relationship with the social worker...she's been very on point and we've been... happy with her. We definitely take the things that she has to say seriously and we...follow through on those things....It was very helpful having her here this year.

Pre-K Site Leader

Figure 13. Site Leaders' and Instructional Staff's Perceptions of Supports Provided by DECE Social Workers (District Schools)



Results from the site visits were consistent with survey findings. Approximately half of the sites that were visited as part of the study reported receiving services from a DECE social worker this year. **Many of the sites reported that they received weekly visits from their social worker and that they were largely satisfied with the support they received.**

Site leaders and staff described how the social workers served as a liaison among teachers, parents, and administrators in identifying student needs and facilitating the procedures for addressing those needs. As an example, one site leader described the social worker as “fabulous. He's been hands-on, he speaks to the families. We've had some children who have had some social-emotional issues, and he's been a very strong and positive person in trying to have the school work together with the family.” Similarly, another site leader described the social worker as “wonderful” and noted that “She [is] helping the parents get the resources they need...for their children. [She also] gives the teachers strategies [and] guidelines to work within the classroom to help the children that are having difficulty.”

Staff at a number of sites also described how the social worker served as a resource for family engagement. For example, the social workers facilitated workshops for parents and caregivers on various topics, such as preparing your child for pre-K, recognizing developmental delays in four-year-olds, and general parenting skills. In the words of one teacher, the social worker

did a program where we had family members come in and they made Play-Doh with their kids, and I think that really helped. Because parents are very busy and sometimes you want to get them in. Maybe one or two might attend, but that program was very well attended.... I've seen a difference in a lot of the parents, because now they're a bit more [engaged and] asking a lot more questions...so, ever since that program, which was a few months ago, it really has turned around.

A concern expressed by some sites was that there was some uncertainty as to the role of the DECE social worker. As one site leader explained,

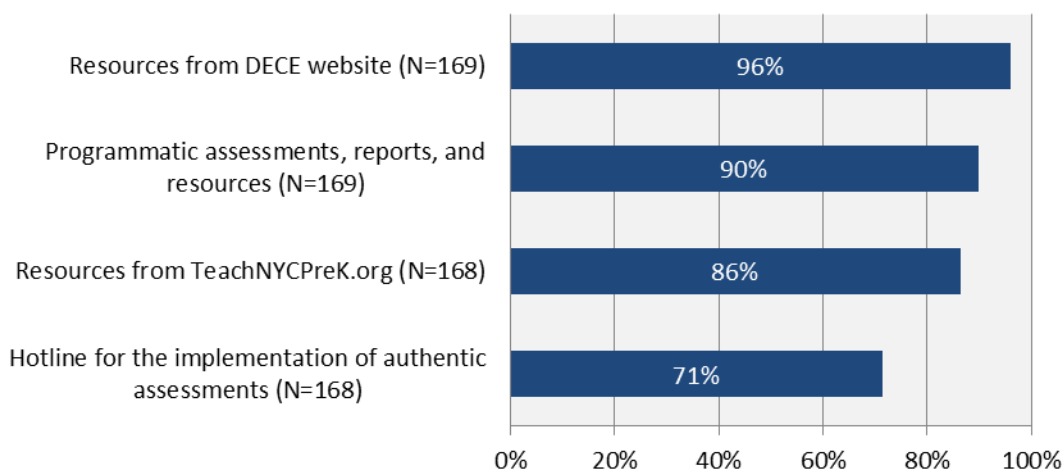
It's a little unclear what the role of the pre-K social worker is, especially in schools that have a lot of supports, because they only come one day a week, and they get pulled to go to other [sites] a lot.... I think that centrally there needs to be some norming around the [role] of the pre-K social worker.

Furthermore, several sites noted that they would like their social worker to be at their site more than once a week.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

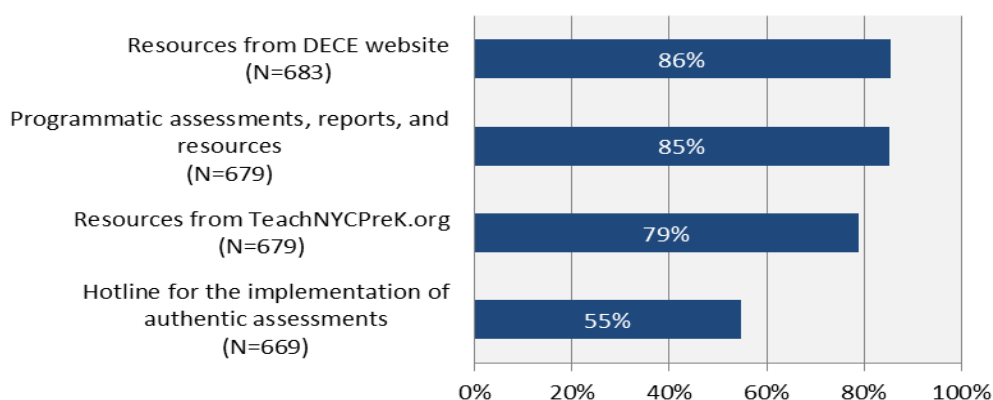
Nearly all site leaders (96 percent) reported that their site used the resources available on the DECE website. Nearly as many respondents indicated that they used programmatic assessments, reports, and resources, such as the ECERS-R and the CLASS (90 percent) and accessed the resources on TeachNYCPre-K.org (86 percent). Furthermore, just under three-quarters of site leaders (71 percent) reported that their sites contacted the authentic assessment hotline (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Types of Resources and Materials Used by Sites, Reported by Site Leaders



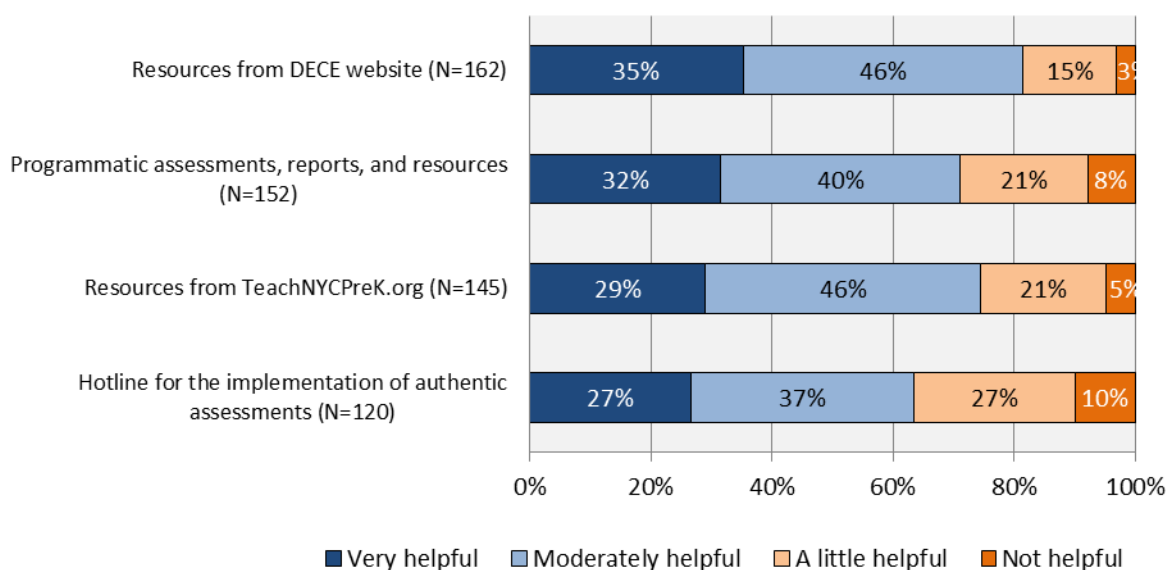
Findings from the instructional staff survey regarding use of materials and resources were fairly consistent with what site leaders reported (Figure 15). For example, the large majority of staff reported that they used resources from the DECE website (86 percent) and TeachNYCPre-K.org (79 percent) as well as programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (85 percent). However, just over half of the staff reported that they had used the authentic assessment hotline (55 percent), which is less than the proportion reported by site leaders.

Figure 15. Types of Resources and Materials Used by Instructional Staff



The majority of site leaders found the Web-based supports to be *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*, including the DECE website (81 percent) and TeachNYCPre-K.org (75 percent). As shown in Figure 16, site leaders also indicated that they were satisfied with the programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (72 percent). Approximately two-thirds of respondents who used the hotline (64 percent) reported that the support they received from the authentic assessment hotline was *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*.

Figure 16. Site Leaders' Perceptions of Resources and Materials

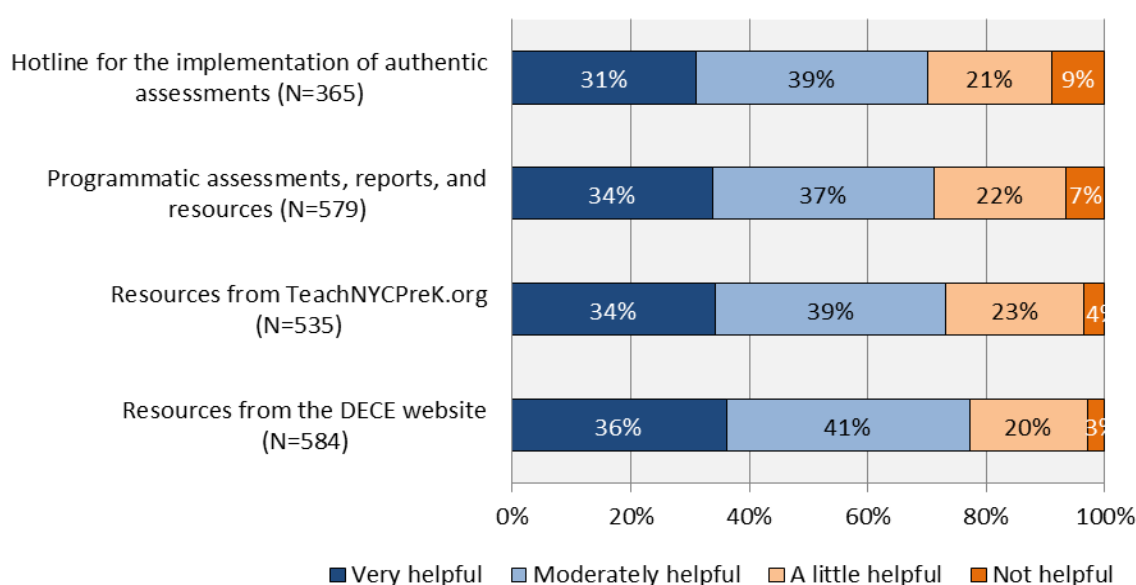


Interestingly, while approximately two-thirds of the leaders of the DOE NYCEECs and district schools (69 percent and 62 percent, respectively) found the authentic assessment hotline to be *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*, fewer than half of the ACS site leaders felt this way (44 percent). ACS sites have typically used the Teaching Strategies GOLD authentic assessment system for many years, while many of the DOE sites have been using this system for only a year, having shifted from one of the other approved authentic assessments. Detailed results on sites' use and perceptions regarding authentic assessment data are presented in a separate report on the use of data for programmatic and instructional purposes.

Site leaders at district schools did not find the programmatic assessments, reports, and resources to be as useful as the leaders of the NYCEECs. More than three-quarters of the ACS and DOE NYCEECs (81 percent and 77 percent, respectively) reported that this type of program support was *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*, compared to approximately two-thirds of the district school site leaders (67 percent). In the 2014–15 school year, NYCEECs typically received results from both the CLASS and ECERS-R programmatic assessments, whereas district schools received results only from the ECERS-R assessment.

Consistent with what site leaders reported, staff reported that the Web-based supports they received were useful in supporting their practice, with about three-fourths indicating that the resources available on the DECE website (77 percent) and TeachNYCPre-K.org (73 percent) were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (Figure 17). Staff felt similarly about the programmatic assessments, reports, and resources (71 percent) as well as the authentic assessment hotline (70 percent).

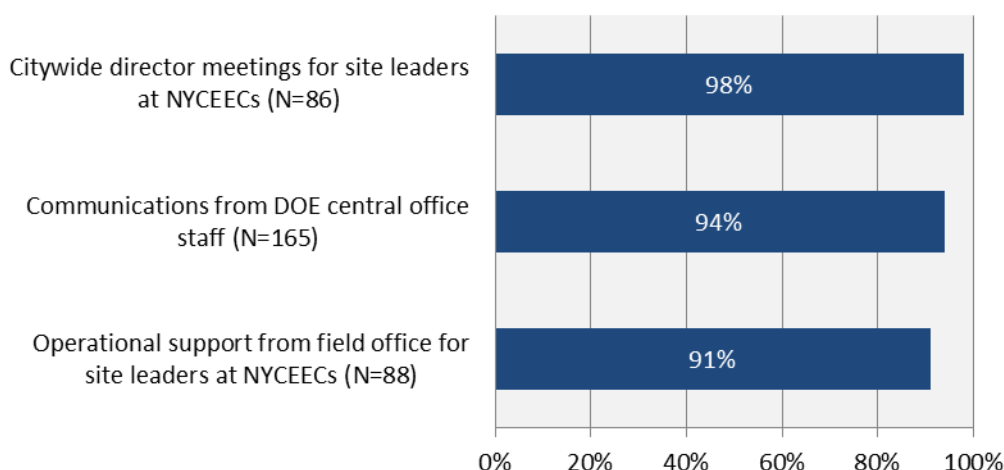
Figure 17. Instructional Staff's Perceptions of Resources and Materials



Interview findings indicate that many sites use the DECE website to access resources and information. For example, site leaders and teachers reported accessing the units of study and lesson plans, guidelines for the daily schedule, information for parents (e.g., registration instructions and deadlines), and the ECERS-R webinar. Furthermore, respondents reported that they were satisfied with the content on the website and indicated that it is easily accessible and useful for their needs.

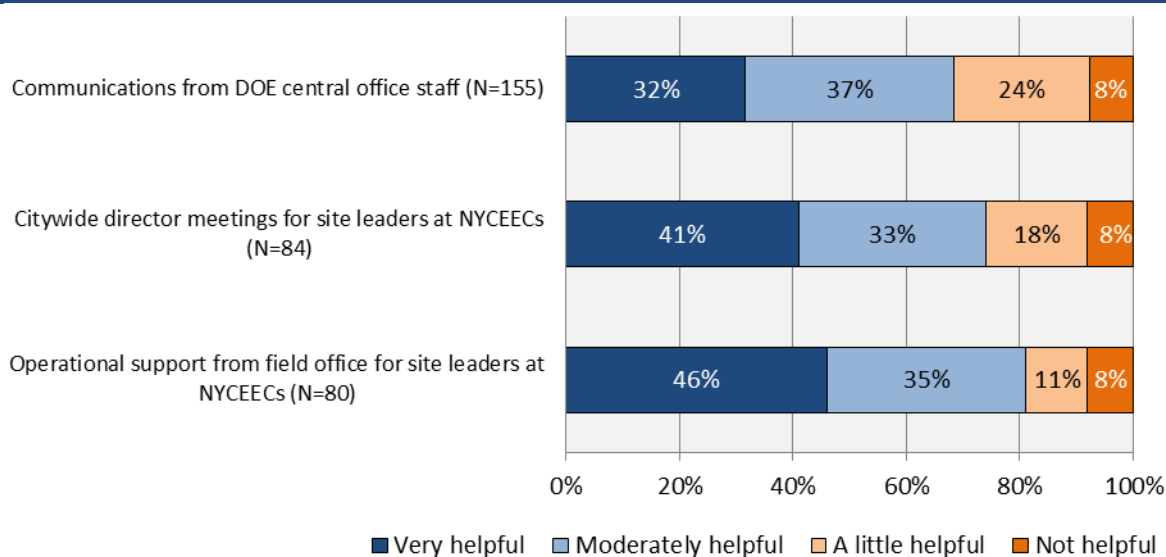
OTHER SUPPORTS FOR SITE LEADERS

The large majority of site leaders indicated that they received communication from DOE central office staff (94 percent). Furthermore, as shown in Figure 18, more than 90 percent of NYCEEC site leaders also attended the citywide director meetings (98 percent) and received operational support from their site's field office (91 percent).

Figure 18. Types of Other Supports Provided to Sites, Reported by Site Leaders

Site leader surveys did not reveal differences in the use of field office operational support by program length. For example, the large majority of the leaders of the new or newly contracted (92 percent), conversion (90 percent), and existing or expanded sites (92 percent) reported that they used this support.

Site leaders reported that they were satisfied with the operational support they received from their field office as well as the support they received through the citywide director meetings, describing these as *moderately helpful* or *very helpful* (81 percent and 74 percent, respectively). As shown in Figure 19, approximately two-thirds (69 percent) of site leaders reported that the communications they received from the DOE central office were *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*.

Figure 19. Perceptions of Other Supports, Reported by Site Leaders

The leaders of the new or newly contracted pre-K sites found certain supports more valuable than the leaders of the continuing sites. For example, the majority of leaders of the new or newly contracted sites found the citywide director meetings (provided to NYCEECs only) to be *very helpful* (60 percent)

compared to approximately only one-third of the site leaders at conversion and existing or expanded NYCEECs.

Overall, site directors from the DOE NYCEECs had positive feedback about the citywide director meetings, noting that they were “helpful,” “informative,” and “interesting.” A number of interviewed site leaders pointed out that the meetings included directors who were new to their positions as well as directors of sites that had been operating for a number of years. However, respondents provided mixed feedback about this dynamic. For example, an experienced site leader viewed the meetings as a way to determine how effectively his/her site is implementing the model:

...once you're already running and you know what you're teaching your children and you know what you want your teachers to teach. It's just a booster...that yes, you're on the right path or no, you're not on the right path.

Other directors found that they did not get anything new out of the meetings. In the words of one respondent,

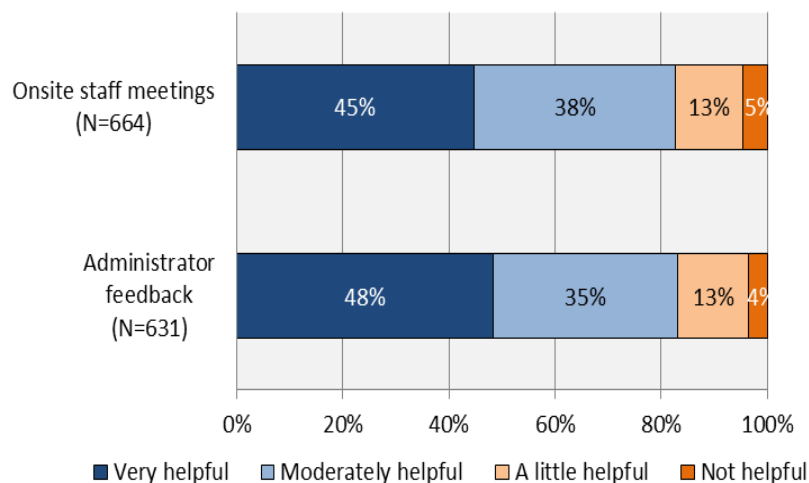
It was not much new information for me. Maybe it's because we've been doing this for a while, and we've already got a system that works well.... The director meetings are really good for people who are just starting and who don't understand UPK. But to sit through that and already have that information? It was just too much.

To ensure that the information presented in the meetings is pertinent to all attendees, it was suggested that the City designate a portion of the meeting for issues and topics that are specific to new site leaders. For example, as one site leader recommended, “the first hour [could] be just for new directors [to]...help get them established, but the second hour will focus on something for everyone.”

Furthermore, a number of respondents expressed a desire for more opportunities to speak with other *Pre- K for All* site directors to share practices. A respondent explained: “I think they need to [give us] a chance to speak to other directors [so] we can hear about best practices and find out what they're doing.”

SITE SUPPORT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Nearly all instructional staff received support in the form of their own staff meetings (95 percent) and administrator feedback (93 percent). Staff reported that they were largely satisfied with both forms of support. Figure 20 shows that over 80 percent of staff found administrator feedback (83 percent) and staff meetings (83 percent) to be *moderately helpful* or *very helpful*.

Figure 20. Instructional Staff's Perceptions of Support From Their Site

According to site interviews, staff meetings are a common practice across the *Pre-K for All* sites, although the frequency, structure, and content of these meetings vary from site to site. Approximately half of the interviewed site leaders held monthly staff meetings, while others met more frequently. Overall, site leaders and staff viewed staff meetings as an opportunity for collaborative instructional planning and discussion of authentic assessment data to ensure that student needs are being met. They were also seen as a valuable forum for sharing challenges and best practices. For example, an administrator noted,

I would love to meet with them more often, honestly, together, because there have been teachers that have brought up concerns and then another teacher is able to say, 'Well, did you ever try this?' It's nice for them to share ideas, but they don't often get that chance to do it.

The value of planning time was highlighted by another site,

[It's] really important, to be given the space and time to plan. This has been really effective for us, because—especially as a preschool teacher, this is our only time. We're with [our students] at lunch, we're with them when they're outside...so we don't really have a lot of time...to have the dedicated half day on Fridays is enormously helpful for us to be able to work together.

CONCLUSION

Overall, *Pre-K for All* sites used a wide range of program supports to aid them in implementing their instructional programs and, on the whole, found them to be helpful.

The survey and interview responses point to several suggestions for improving these supports. These include:

- Provide additional professional development for instructional staff—both lead teachers and teacher assistants—on strategies for working with students who have behavioral challenges, linguistically diverse students, and students with disabilities.

- Ensure that the DOE-sponsored or facilitated professional development is appropriate for staff at all experience levels and that the content of the trainings does not repeat what staff may have already received.
- Increase or expand the support from DECE coaches and social workers, each of which was found to be very helpful for both site leaders and teachers. (It should be noted that the DOE has hired additional staff to support the Year 2 expansion efforts.)
- Continue to populate the DECE website with a range of programmatic and instructional guidelines and resources, as sites found this form of support particularly useful.
- Enhance the usefulness of the citywide director meetings by designating portions of the meetings for topics that are specific to new site leaders. In addition, ensure that the meetings include content that adequately addresses the needs and concerns of the more experienced site leaders. For example, provide a forum for experienced site leaders to share best practices with one another. In addition, continue to provide opportunities for more experienced site leaders to share practices with less experienced site leaders.

APPENDIX

Table A-1. Participation in Evaluation Activities, by Type of Site and Program Length

Characteristic of Pre-K Sites	Number of Surveys ¹		Site Visits
	Site Leader	Staff	
ACS New York City Early Education Center	20	74	7
DOE New York City Early Education Center	68	249	19
District school	70	321	13
Charter school	1	3	1
New or newly contracted programs	33	117	11
Converted from half to full day	60	227	15
Existing or expanded full day	66	303	14

¹Site identification was missing for 24 site leaders and 23 staff.