



An Educated Approach: NURTURING A COACHING CULTURE AT ISIKKENT SCHOOLS

The administrators, teachers, students and parents affiliated with Turkey's Isikkent Schools take pride in being part of a learning community that stands out from the crowd.

Established in 1998 within a nonprofit foundation, Isikkent Schools provide a unique learning environment that brings students ranging from preschool through grade 12 together on one campus—an organizational model seen infrequently in Turkey. Isikkent is also set apart by its mission: In a nation where most students are taught to measure their success and learning by their exam scores, Isikkent's teachers and administrators pride themselves on educating young people holistically. With a creative, inquiry-based approach to teaching; a high premium on global citizenship; and a commitment to ethical speech and behavior, Isikkent Schools strive to develop young people into highly motivated, self-aware and thoughtful adults passionate about lifelong learning.

Given the desire of Isikkent's leaders to innovate in service of student development, it's no surprise that the school joined Turkey's coaching movement at its very onset, laying the groundwork for a program designed to impact the lives of everyone affiliated with the Isikkent community. Coaching is more than just a student- or faculty-development service: It is the foundation of the school's culture.

In recognition of Isikkent's exceptional use of coaching, the International Coach Federation (ICF) awarded the school the 2013 ICF International Prism Award. The Prism Award honors organizations that have achieved the highest standard of excellence in the implementation of coaching programs fulfilling rigorous professional standards, addressing key strategic goals, shaping organizational culture, and yielding discernible and measurable positive impacts. (Learn more about the award at Coachfederation.org/prism.)

Isikkent has made a significant investment of time and money in coaching with the full support of leading school

COACHING AT ISIKKENT: BY THE NUMBERS

802
students enrolled
(2013-'14 academic year)

137
employees

41
coach-teachers

93
students receiving
one-on-one coaching



administrators, who allocated 24 percent of the school's professional development budget for coach training for teachers. In 2009, school leaders contracted an ICF Credential-holder and an ICF-accredited training program to provide training and Mentor Coaching. All teachers participated in a two-day-long induction course that introduced them to the ICF Code of Ethics and Core Competencies and addressed several coaching skills applicable to their work in the classroom. At the conclusion of the induction course, interested teachers were given the opportunity to enroll in an ICF Accredited Coach Training Program. More than 40 teachers took advantage of this opportunity.

Isikkent's coaching committee, established by coach-teachers in the school's first graduating ACTP class, helped develop an infrastructure for the program. In addition to adapting the ICF Code of Ethics to form a cornerstone of the school's culture, committee members revised commonly used coaching questions to suit different age groups. The coach-teachers collaborated with members of Isikkent's information technology department to develop an electronic coaching log that they could use to document their coaching sessions while ensuring 100-percent confidentiality. They also developed an initiative to market coaching to Isikkent students, teachers and parents,

ensuring that it would be perceived as a positive—not remedial—intervention from the outset. As a result, when Isikkent's corps of coach-teachers began providing services, they did so with the full buy-in of the school community.



Coaching is available to anyone in the school community who wants it. The program is closely aligned with Isikkent's guidance services, and with a parent's permission, students are encouraged to schedule sessions with coach-teachers. Topics covered during coaching engagements have included goal-setting, planning for the future, interpersonal communication and conflict resolution. The coach-teachers also coach Isikkent teachers

and parents on a voluntary basis. Additionally, six coach-teachers are trained to administer Parent Effectiveness Training with an eye toward developing "coach-like parents" who are skillful at giving feedback, listening actively and asking powerful questions.

All of Isikkent's teachers and support staff have completed several hours of coach-specific training in order to better understand and support the school's coaching culture, and coach training is integrated into Isikkent's new-teacher orientation. They're encouraged to apply their coaching skills to interactions with students, parents and colleagues.



Isikkent's leaders say their investment in coaching has paid off, with impacts that have exceeded their expectations. Students who have received coaching report improvements in their conflict-resolution abilities, capacity for setting and reaching goals, and cooperation and communication with peers. Teachers who have sought coaching provide similarly positive feedback about the experience, citing enhanced communication with students and parents and improved goal-setting abilities as benefits of coaching. Meanwhile, the parents who have learned coaching skills through Parent Effectiveness Training report that, as a result of the program, they're more able to articulate their needs to their children, more inclined to resolve conflicts with their children through compromise, and more likely to approach conflict while protecting the relationship (versus "resolving problems the way I like").

Disciplinary problems in Isikkent's middle and high schools have declined sharply since the introduction of coaching. In the 2008-'09 academic year, the middle school reported carrying out disciplinary actions against approximately 16 percent of the student population. In the high school, administrators reported disciplinary action against 26.5 percent of the student population during the same

academic year. By the close of the 2012-'13 school year, however, these averages had fallen to 2.08 percent and 4.74 percent, respectively.

Isikkent's coaching culture has brought the school closer to its goal of achieving International Baccalaureate accreditation by fostering traits aligned with the IB Learner Profile, such as curiosity, open-mindedness and compassion. It has also empowered students to achieve their own goals for the future, with an impressive 94.1 percent of students in Isikkent's 2013 graduating class earning admission to one of their top-5 university choices and 70.6 percent of graduates gaining acceptance to their first-choice school.

Today, Isikkent Schools provide the benchmark that many organizations in Turkey are measuring themselves by as they strive to construct coaching programs that are standards-based, highly impactful and sustainable over time. School leaders have told Isikkent's story at events for human-resources professionals and shared their expertise with colleagues from institutions across the country.

Formed in 1995, today the International Coach Federation (ICF) is the leading global organization, with more than 20,000* members, dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by setting high professional standards, providing independent certification, and building a network of credentialed coaches. We exist to support and advance the coaching profession through programs and standards supported by our members and to be an authoritative source on coaching information and research for the public.

**Numbers as of December 2012. Numbers are subject to change month to month.*



coachfederation.org