

Executive Coaching

A Resource Provided by
**The Connecticut Principals' Center of
The Connecticut Association of Schools**



The coach enhanced the principal's leadership skills by powering the data so that teachers were not over-whelmed with "the small stuff". Analysis and follow up instructional action were then timely and laser focused. The coach is an independent person who brings a history of best practice and has mastered the principalship process in her own right.

~ Fran Rabinowitz, Superintendent
Hamden Public Schools

Executive Coach's Responsibilities

- Serve on-site coaching days, including observations as appropriate to goals
- Serve off-site sessions with leadership team, and/or grouped cohorts
- Provide unlimited phone and email access between him/herself and school leader
- Review and analyze school improvement plan and school data
- Engage school leader in dialogue that explicitly identifies goals and objectives that will impact student achievement
- Collaborate with the school leader to identify the areas of focus for coaching, the norms and expectations in the coaching relationships, and the indicators of success
- Complete a work plan with the school leader, including targeted professional development
- Maintain an on-going record of meetings and contacts with school leader
- Establish a calendar of weekly on-site meetings and contacts with the school leader
- Participate in off-site team and cohort meetings
- Complete and submit status reports as needed

Why Coaching?

- After the quality of the teacher, the most important variable determining student achievement is the quality of the school leader.
- Research tells us that school leaders who have the support of a coach within a focused program of assistance stay in the job longer and perform better.
- You have already, via your hiring and induction activities, invested significantly in the success of your school leader. Providing a coach is "going the extra mile" to develop the capacity of the leader to improve student achievement.
- There is a disconnect between many administrative preparation programs and the realities of a school leader's life.

Program Definition

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Executive Coaching Program is one of many components of technical assistance supported by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Consistent with Connecticut's Common Core of Leading, it focuses on improving the instructional and organizational leadership capacity of principals.

At present, under a contract with CSDE, CAS Executive Coaches are working with principals in 60 schools in 22 Connecticut school districts.

Program Precepts

The precepts of the Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success program at UC Santa Cruz form the basis for the executive coaching model (Bloom 2003):

- The coach is a "different observer" of the principal and his/her context. Bringing a different perspective to the relationship, the coach can see both the circumstances and possibilities that the principal might not.
- The coaching relationship is based upon trust and permission.
- The coach moves between instructional and facilitative coaching strategies based upon assessment of the principal's needs and in pursuit of agreed-upon goals.
- The coach's fundamental commitment is to student success, and the coach will appropriately push the principal to that end.
- The Connecticut Standards for School Leaders as well as the Common Core of Leading are frameworks for goal-setting and ongoing formative assessment.

Program Implementation

- Phase 1 - Assessment and Reflection: Following initial communication among coach, principal, and superintendent, parties meet to discuss the overall process. The coach and principal begin a self-reflection and review of school data process. The principal completes his/her reflection.
- Phase 2 - Principal and Executive Coach Planning: The coach and principal review the self-reflection, discuss key focus areas, and mutually agree on 2-3 key objectives for improvement. They also discuss the coaching process including expectations of participants, indicators of success, monitoring of objectives, and assessing progress.
- Phase 3 - Executive Coach Work Plan Development: The coach and principal identify action steps to achieve principal's targeted objectives and the coach completes the executive work plan.
- Phase 4 - Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation: The executive work plan is implemented. Results are monitored on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis. The coach completes an annual assessment and, in turn, is evaluated on the results of the coaching process.

Content

Acknowledging that coaching and professional development planning are contextual and influenced by the needs of the participating principals, a sequence of professional growth opportunities might include:

- Systems Thinking (responding to assessment results, connections to vision, improvement planning, change processes)
- Vision (believing all children can learn)
- Teaching and Learning (curriculum, use of data, supervision and evaluation, professional learning communities)
- Human Relationships (working with different people, right work and right team, culture and community, professional learning communities)
- Culture for Learning (distributive leadership, climate, human relationships)

CAS Responsibilities

- Recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate executive coaches in order to support the leaders of selected schools to improve student achievement.
- Provide professional development to support the achievement of the personal/professional goals and school/district goals of the school leaders.
- Maintain a web-based electronic meeting place and clearing house that allows for data collection, networking, the sharing of resources and best practices, and the implementation of an accountability system.

Support Options And Budget

Three levels of executive coaching support services are offered:

Gold Support

- Geographic cohort designed to serve similar type districts in a defined area
- Hourly on-site, phone and email coaching sessions
- Often combines "group coaching", fostering the building of local support networks, with "individual coaching" to system and personal/professional goals
- Rate negotiable depending upon location/travel and services

Platinum Support

- 15 on-site coaching days*, including observations as appropriate to goals
- 5 off-site sessions with leadership team, superintendent, and/or grouped cohorts
- Unlimited phone and email access to coach
- Individualized goals (system and personal/professional)

Diamond Support

- 30 on-site coaching days*, including observations as appropriate to goals
- Up to 10 off-site sessions with leadership team, superintendent, and/or grouped cohorts
- Unlimited phone and email access to coach
- Individualized goals (system and personal/professional)

•Rates vary depending upon level of support and include administration, executive coach salary, secretarial, mileage, materials, and CAS facility usage.

My work with our Executive Coach has been a powerful experience. Our collaboration has allowed me to shift an already proficient staff into expert practitioners in analysis of data and its instructional implication. This has resulted in improvement in student achievement overall and with racial and economic subgroups.

~ Kathleen E. England, Principal
Nathan Hale School

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