

CAS Executive Coaching Program

Theory of Action

We believe that student learning will improve and be sustained through strengthening and aligning operational systems closest to the instructional core within schools. We believe further that the results achieved by students are governed by the actions of the adults in the system more than anything else, and that the primary responsibility of leadership is to improve the knowledge and skills of the adults in the system in a continuous manner. We also believe that, with the proper support and accountability systems in place, school leaders can develop their instructional and organizational leadership capacity for the purpose of improving student achievement.

Executive coaching is an effective component of professional support and development for school leaders and leadership teams. If the executive coach and school leader and leadership team commit to and act on a collaboratively developed action agenda emphasizing data-based strategic planning, principal-empowered staff collaboration, and quick-response cycles of instructional improvement, then the performance and efficiency of school leaders and leadership teams will be enhanced and student achievement will improve.

Role of the Coach

The role of the coach is to facilitate and support the professional growth and development of the principal and the leadership team within a school in order to increase student achievement, and to build capacity and ensure the sustainability of the school improvement efforts. The coach's fundamental commitment is to student success, and because the principal is central to that success, the coach will appropriately push the principal to that end.

The role of the coach is contextual and is directly related to the skills that the school leadership already possesses; the day to day organization and operation of the school; the functioning of the school within the larger context of the district and its culture, history and operational systems. The coach will assist the principal and the school leadership team in taking the school from where it is, to where it should and, more importantly, can be.

Whether the principal is a novice, a veteran or a rising star, the role of the coach is to assist the principal to move to the next level of management and leadership expertise, to broaden and deepen his/her skills, in order to move the school improvement agenda forward. The coach is successful if s/he has strengthened and fortified the skills of the principal and the school leadership team in their school improvement efforts.

The principal will develop with the coach an Action Plan to support the goals outlined in the School Improvement Plan. The Action Plan should reflect the leadership skills that need to be developed to fortify the school improvement efforts.

It is critical that the coach work with the principal, not in place of the principal, not in addition to the principal, and not as a shadow principal.

The coach should be assisting the principal and the school leadership team by helping them to develop the ability to . . .

- Clearly articulate and focus the work of the school, *concentrating on a few changes with a big, fast payoff*.
- Use data to guide building level decisions, *keeping and expanding what works and eliminating what doesn't*.
- Have and *communicate frequently consistent, high expectations* for staff and students.
- Understand curriculum and instruction thoroughly enough to provide leadership in these areas.
- Consistently *monitor classroom instruction* providing feedback that is helpful in changing behaviors.
- Consistently *follow-up and follow-through*, "walking the walk" as well as "talking the talk".
- Delegate effectively and *distribute leadership and responsibility* among teachers.
- Maintain a safe, secure physical and emotional learning environment for staff and students.
- Draw on the resources of the community with particular emphasis on engaging parents as supportive partners.
- Build and maintain efficient organizational systems including time management and policies detailing building procedures and processes.

The coach may participate in any or all of the types of activities listed below with or without the principal being in attendance or participating in each activity. It is understood, however, that coach participation in these activities is as a collaborator, a contributor, as a partner to the principal, not as an independent authority within the school.

- Analyze and chart data for specific purposes
- Conduct classroom walkthroughs
- Attend data team meetings
- Provide individual or small group PD/TA to teachers
- Attend parent/community meetings
- Observe individual students
- Observe specific individual teachers
- Meet with literacy/numeracy consultants/data team facilitator for planning purposes
- Participate in difficult decisions with the principal/teachers/parents
- Serve as a sounding board for ideas/initiatives
- Get feedback for the principal regarding initiatives and activities