

Developing Strong Collaborations: Principals & Instructional Coaches

Effecting positive change in classroom practice depends on strong collaborative relationships between principals and instructional coaches.

You can use the following questions to guide the development of principal–coach partnership agreements.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Boundaries

Coach

- What expectations do you have of me and the work I do?
- What responsibilities will I have as a member of this staff?
- Which teachers will I work with?
- How will I determine which teachers to work with?
- What are the boundaries of my work?
- What is outside the boundaries of my work?
- How do you feel about me... (serving on a district committee, facilitating a school committee, etc.)?
- What results do you expect over the next year, two years, and three years?

Principal

- What do you expect of me?
- What do we think teachers expect of you?
- Where are the greatest needs in our school?
- Which teachers have expressed interest in receiving your support?
- What does the district expect of you?
- What are the defined responsibilities of your role as a coach?
- How much flexibility do we have to adjust your work to meet the needs of our students and staff?
- Here are our improvement goals . . .

Support and Resources

Coach

- Here is how you can support me in my role as a coach . . .
- What resources are available for me? Technology? Space? Money for professional publications or development?

Principal

- What support do you want from me?
- What resources do you need to feel comfortable?
- Here's how you will share in the school's resources for professional development . . .

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Processes

Coach

- What process do we want to establish to help teachers access my services?
- What is the best way for me to spend the majority of my time?
- How will I log my work? What evidence do you want?
- When shall we meet to discuss my work plan? How often?

Principal

- What process do you think will help teachers access your services easily and conveniently?
- How will you demonstrate how you spend your time?
- When shall we meet to discuss how you plan your work to serve teachers?

Confidentiality

Coach

- What information do you expect me to provide about my work with individual teachers or teams of teachers?
- What agreements will enable teachers to feel comfortable
 - interacting with me,
 - sharing their strengths and challenges, and
 - taking risks to change their instructional practices?
- What’s the best way for me to tell you when I feel you are asking for information outside our agreement area?

Principal

- What agreements will enable teachers to feel comfortable
 - interacting with you,
 - sharing their strengths and challenges, and
 - taking risks to change their instructional practices?
- How will we monitor our agreements about confidentiality?

—Adapted from Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2017, second edition). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. Available via <https://learningforward.org/resource/taking-lead-new-roles-teachers-school-based-coaches-2nd-edition>