

Best Practices Checklist for SFC Principal/Supervisor Partners

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The primary role of instructional coaches is to provide professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) opportunities to support to their peer colleagues. Coaching has the potential to be an especially effective form of PD/PL because it can be personalized and sustained over time. **Student Focused Coaching (SFC)** is one model of coaching. SFC is defined as a **cooperative***, ideally collaborative, **professional relationship*** with colleagues **mutually engaged*** in efforts that help maximize every teacher's knowledge and skills to enhance student learning (Hasbrouck & Michel, 2022).

- * **COOPERATIVE:** Coaching cannot be forced on a colleague. Coaches have no power and no authority over their peer colleagues. They are NOT supervisors and cannot participate in supervision or evaluation decisions, either directly or indirectly.
- * **RELATIONSHIP:** Coaches can only provide effective PD/PL when they have established a trusting and mutually respectful professional relationship with their colleagues. This is facilitated when the coach and teachers focus on partnering for student success. Establishing and maintaining mutual trust requires that coaching interactions be completely confidential *unless specific permission is granted.*
- * **MUTUALLY ENGAGED:** SFC coaches work with ALL teachers, focused on enhancing student learning. Coaches primarily spend their time engaged in activities categorized as *Facilitator, Collaborative Problem Solver, or Teacher/Learner.*

Coaches are most effective when they work in **PARTNERSHIP** with their principal(s) and/or supervisor(s). To maximize this partnership, we recommend that principals/supervisors:

- (1) *Understand the **ROLE** of coaches.* The coach's job is to provide support for professional development and learning. The most effective way to do this is to engage in systematic, collaborative problem-solving, rather than simply observation and feedback (coaching cycle).
- (2) Understand that coaches are **NOT SUPERVISORS**. Coaches cannot ethically or legally be involved in the evaluation of teachers, either directly or indirectly. Coaches have no power or authority over their peer colleagues. They work as *peer partners* to their teacher colleagues to support effective classroom practices to promote positive student outcomes.
- (3) Fully honor the **CONFIDENTIALITY** of the coaching/teacher relationship as appropriate. Although administrators/supervisors cannot mandate coaching to any teacher, they can strongly suggest to a teacher that they should seek support from a coach. Such a suggestion would be confidential and cannot to be shared with the coach without the permission of the referred teacher.
- (4) Take responsibility to clearly **DEFINE** and **DESCRIBE** the coach's role to the teaching staff, including the confidentiality of the process. State any obligations of the staff in working with the coach (e.g., a mandate to share current student performance data with the coach, which is highly recommended). Make clear the limitations of the coach's role.
- (5) Help the coach find sufficient **TIME** to design and provide effective PDL to peer colleagues.
- (6) Work to strengthen the coach/principal partnership by having regularly scheduled **FORMAL CONVERSATIONS** with coaches about (a) their role, (b) how they are spending their time, and (c) how you can be an effective professional partner to support their work. Initially, aim for a minimum of 3 times per year for these collaborative conversations.

- (7) Effectively **SUPERVISE** coaches by regularly providing specific feedback for professional growth.
- (8) Support the coach's efforts to successfully implement **SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT**, such as leadership teams.
- (9) Ensure that coaches **KEEP LEARNING** about instructional practices supported by the best possible research. Coaches should continue to read and study, seek out their own PDL opportunities, and access the support of colleagues and outside resources to gain new knowledge about effective teaching and effective coaching.
- (10) Understand and work to implement the elements of the **SAILS FRAMEWORK** for effective schools. Coaches must possess a strong knowledge base of what it means to support explicit and effective instruction in the classroom.
- (11) Work to create a **CLIMATE** and **CULTURE** for student success so teachers will be inspired with the desire to teach all students effectively. Coaches then provide collegial support to help teachers achieve this goal.