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Section I. Introduction

Intent

Since the amount of research regarding instructional coaching has continually increased, it is essential to develop a clear and specific description of the instructional coaching model within Beaufort County School District. The coaching model recognizes the needs of each individual teacher and is tied to the School’s Improvement Plan (SIP) and the District’s Strategic Plan.

The Purpose of Instructional Coaching

Our coaching model recognizes the needs of each individual teacher and is tied to our school improvement goals.

“By focusing coaching on specific goals for student learning, a coach can navigate directly toward a measurable impact and increased student achievement” (Sweeney, 2011, p. 1). Coaching efforts are targeted and aligned toward student learning (BCSD DRP 3.3).

The purpose of instructional coaching…

… instructional coaches partner with teachers to support them as they meet goals usually through the use of effective teaching strategies (Knight, 2009).

… is to help close the student achievement gap and accelerate learning for all students by building teacher capacity through implementation of effective instructional practices (Casey, 2008).

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles direct our coaching model:

- Student learning is at the heart of our work.
- Professional learning emerges from mutual respect, collegial relationships and a shared responsibility for student learning.
- Job embedded learning provides authentic content and context.
- Adult learners benefit from descriptive feedback relevant to their professional and student-centered goals.
- Gradual release of responsibility supports student and adult learning.

Section II –Instructional Coaching

The Instructional Coaching Model

The principal and instructional coach will work together to clearly define the role of the coach. The coach is not an administrator and does not evaluate teachers.

“Student-centered coaching is about (1) setting specific goals for students that are rooted in the standards and curriculum, and (2) working collaboratively to ensure the goals are met” (Sweeney, 2011, p. 7). “One way to provide this necessary support is by organizing these steps into cycles in which coaches create a structure for their time that allows for sustained collaboration over a period of time” (Sweeney, 2011, p. 31). Coaching
cycles contain the following characteristics:

- They involve in-depth work with a teacher or pair of teachers, lasting approximately four to six weeks.
- They focus on learning targets that come from either formal or informal student data.
- They include regular planning sessions, such as a 30- to 50-minute planning session per week and one to three times per week in the classroom for co-teaching, modeling instruction, or observing the teaching and learning (planning takes place prior as well as after instruction).

A coach should expect to take on four to six coaching cycles at a time. Coaching cycles represent a portion of a coach’s overall work. Other duties may include: planning and facilitating small- and large-group professional development, facilitating professional learning communities, gathering resources, mentoring, having informal planning sessions, and helping teachers organize their materials.

**Tasks not included in the coach’s role**

The role of the coach does not include:

- Evaluating teachers
- Providing information that would be used for evaluation
- Serving as a substitute teacher
- Serving as the principal designee
- Taking primary responsibility for the instruction of a specifically assigned group of students
- Performing clerical duties outside the primary job performance criteria
- Developing or preparing school budgets
- Disciplining students in an administrative capacity

The practice of having instructional coaches serve in multiple capacities in a school can be problematic causing the coach to lose effectiveness in facilitating teacher learning. Principals should publicize and guard the coach’s roles and responsibilities.

**The Roles of an Instructional Coach (roles are not in priority order)**

**Role: Supporter of Student Learning**

**Purpose:** To design instruction that focuses directly on the diverse needs of students.

Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Setting standards-based goals for student learning
- Co-planning to design differentiated instruction
- Co-teaching to implement differentiated instruction
- Designing formative assessments, or ‘assessment for learning’
- Developing strategies for standards-based grading
- Collaborative analysis of student work or performance data

**Role: Data Coach**

**Purpose:** To facilitate conversations using data to drive instructional decisions.

Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Collaborating with teachers to analyze formative and summative student achievement data
- Assisting teachers with the use of data to improve student learning

**Role: Facilitator for Change**

**Purpose:** To engage teachers in reflective thinking while looking at their own instructional practices critically
and analytically. Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Fostering a safe, trusting environment for teachers
- Introducing alternatives and refinements for teacher instructional practices

**Role: Curriculum or Content Facilitator**

**Purpose:** To promote implementation of our content Standards through adopted curricula. Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Unpacking the Standards to create learning targets
- Increasing teacher content knowledge
- Facilitating a better understanding of the structure of the written, taught, and tested curriculum
- Dissecting standards to guide identification of essential knowledge and skills

**Role: Supporter of Effective Instruction**

**Purpose:** To support the implementation of effective instructional strategies. Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Modeling instruction to demonstrate effective practices
- Co-planning with a focus on developing a robust repertoire of pedagogical practices
- Providing descriptive feedback to teachers
- Building teacher capacity regarding school instructional programs and approaches

**Role: Professional Learning Facilitator**

**Purpose:** To design and facilitate effective professional learning opportunities. Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Providing professional development
- Facilitating other forms of professional development (e.g., teacher-led PD; school-led PD)

**Role: Learner, Resource Provider, and Partner**

**Purpose:** To engage in continuous learning in order to keep current; to identify a variety of resources to enhance classroom instruction and student achievement; and to support and communicate the school initiatives. Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in professional development opportunities and professional reading
- Practicing and reflecting about what is learned
- Identifying instructional and assessment resources for teachers
- Sharing research and instructional best practices
- Involving stakeholders in the implementation of school teaching and learning goals
- Acting as a strong advocate for student learning

**The Roles of the Principal (roles are not in priority order)**

**Role: Communicator**

**Purpose:** To build understanding of the interconnectedness of the coaching model, school improvement goals and initiatives including but not limited to:

- Articulating the purpose and components of the coaching model to staff
- Leading and communicating to staff about school goals and initiatives in relation to the coaching model
- Maintaining the fidelity of the coaching model
Role: **Facilitator**

**Purpose:** To collaboratively plan and coordinate professional learning including but not limited to:
- Fostering a safe and trusting environment
- Aligning professional learning with school improvement goals
- Facilitating access to the coaching model process

Role: **Instructional Leader**

**Purpose:** To support coaches and teachers in the coaching model including but not limited to:
- Implementing the school initiatives
- Meeting with school coaches and leadership team on a regular basis to examine school data and assist in school-wide planning (including professional learning)
- Acting as a strong advocate for student learning based on data used to inform instruction
- Sharing best practices research
- Committing to meet regularly with coach or coaches to support their roles

Role: **Learner**

**Purpose:** To promote and model professional learning including but not limited to:
- Engaging in professional reading and learning opportunities
- Participating actively in the teaching and learning cycle by regularly observing classroom instruction

Role: **Evaluator**

**Purpose:** To perform supervisory responsibilities including but not limited to:
- The Principal is responsible for evaluating the coach
- The Principal is responsible for evaluating teachers
- Ensuring the role of coach as a non-administrative, non-evaluative member of the teaching staff is maintained

**Section III. Implementation of the Instructional Coaching Model in schools**

**Essential Understandings:**
- Participation in instructional coaching is most effective when the purpose of instructional coaching and the roles of the coach, principal and teachers are clearly articulated and communicated.
- Instructional coaching is most effective in improving student learning when assessment data is used.
- Coaching is not “invitational”; all educators benefit from instructional coaching.

To promote a shared understanding of instructional coaching throughout the school system, each school beginning or reviewing their implementation of the coaching model will participate in a three-part process that includes: readiness, implementation and assessment.

**Readiness**

Schools establish the readiness to implement instructional coaching through a process such as the following:
1. Administrative team communicates with staff the purpose and the roles of instructional coaches and how the coaching model supports improvement of student learning.

2. Instructional and administrative staff review relevant data and school improvement plan (SIP) to determine building focus for coaching through the decision making process.

3. Coaches and administrators participate in district trainings relevant to instructional coaching including the processes for determining readiness and implementing the instructional coaching model in each building.

**Implementation**

The on-going foundation of a professional learning community is essential for building a common knowledge and experience around the written, taught and tested curriculum. Throughout the implementation of coaching in a school, coaches are able to:

- Work with teachers to align instruction to state standards.
- Facilitate inter-visitations to see and learn from other classrooms (within and between schools).
- Organize study groups, on-site workshops and book studies.
- Work with collaborative groups to examine student work and plan instruction.
- Read and provide research to staff.
- Attend coaching trainings and bring information and strategies back to building staff.
- Help to establish common vocabulary; background knowledge and experiences; and collaborative relationships.
- Implement student-centered coaching cycles.

**Assessment**

The principal and coach use the Student-Centered Coaching Rubric (Sweeney, 2011, p. 181) as a guide to reflect on the principal’s and coach’s progress towards establishing a student-centered effort. Implementation of student-centered instructional coaching is formally assessed by the principal’s evaluation of the coach which includes examining evidence such as the Results-Based Coaching Tool (Sweeney, 2011, p. 186-187).

**Results-Based Coaching Tool (RBCT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Name(s):</th>
<th>Coach Name(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Cycle Focus:</td>
<td>Dates of Coaching Cycle:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards-Based Goal</th>
<th>Instructional Practice</th>
<th>Student-Centered Coaching</th>
<th>Teacher Learning</th>
<th>Student Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the goal for student learning?</td>
<td>What instructional practices will help students reach the goal?</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>As a result of the coaching cycle, what instructional practices are being used on a consistent basis?</td>
<td>How did student achievement increase as a result of the coaching cycle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will...</td>
<td>Teacher will...</td>
<td>Teacher is...</td>
<td>Students are...</td>
<td>Post Assessment Data:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard(s):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Targets:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up for students not meeting goal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Data:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section IV - Training and support for the Instructional Coaching Model

Guiding principles:
Coaches require a professional learning community of their own to continually increase their knowledge and skill in order to build the capacity of teachers for quality teaching and learning. Beaufort County School District values, and is committed to, the initial and ongoing training of coaches.
*Improving Instruction Through Coaching* (OSPI & CSTP, 2007); *Taking the Lead* (Killion, 2005)

Knowledge and skills

To support quality teaching and learning, instructional coaches need to understand and integrate best practices:

A. Training for new coaches will focus on overviews of the following:
   - *Instructional Coaching Handbook*
   - District initiatives
   - *The Continuum of Self Reflection*
   - *Results-Based Coaching*

B. On-going training will be provided centrally on a three-year cycle. Topics will include, but not be limited to, the following:
   - Coaching foundations
   - Curriculum and assessment
   - Pedagogy
   - Professional learning communities
   - Use of data to inform instruction

C. Coaches need to understand the essential elements of adult learning:
   - Creating a safe and supportive environment
   - Goal setting
   - Group dynamics
   - Learning to lead reflective conversations
   - Gradual release of responsibility
   - Change theories
   - Planning and giving effective presentations & processing protocols
   - Learning styles

Infrastructure

The following organizational structures will be provided to support the on-going professional learning of instructional coaches:

1. Coaches will meet one day per month in content/instructional level groups or groups could be combined when working on common training content. During this time, coaches will:
• Participate in goal setting, review and reflection.
• Review and/or presentation of new or existing district/program initiatives and expectations.
• Participate in cross grade level conversations to promote systemic curricular alignment.
• Engage in professional learning and collegial problem-solving.
• Be given opportunities to have a voice in selecting their own learning topic.

2. Training will be scheduled to avoid taking coaches out of their buildings during the weeks when the state assessments are administered.
3. Coach-to-coach mentoring for new coaches is provided.
4. Coaches will meet regularly with their principal to focus their work in support of the school improvement plan.
5. Coaching training agendas and schedules will be communicated to principals. Principals have an open invitation to attend any coach training they feel would be helpful to their own professional learning.

Planning and coordination

Instructional services department directors and coordinators, instructional coaches, school administrators and consultants (e.g. Math Design Collaborative and Literacy Design Collaborative) collaborate to provide professional learning for instructional coaches.

Section V - References


