



Standardizing Teacher- Support Coaching Practices

District Leadership Forum

Sarjana Jaiswal

Research Associate

Caleb Hausman

Research Manager

Luke Churchill

Research Manager

LEGAL CAVEAT

EAB Global, Inc. ("EAB") has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the information it provides to members. This report relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and EAB cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or any analysis based thereon. In addition, neither EAB nor any of its affiliates (each, an "EAB Organization") is in the business of giving legal, accounting, or other professional advice, and its reports should not be construed as professional advice. In particular, members should not rely on any legal commentary in this report as a basis for action, or assume that any tactics described herein would be permitted by applicable law or appropriate for a given member's situation. Members are advised to consult with appropriate professionals concerning legal, tax, or accounting issues, before implementing any of these tactics. No EAB Organization or any of its respective officers, directors, employees, or agents shall be liable for any claims, liabilities, or expenses relating to (a) any errors or omissions in this report, whether caused by any EAB organization, or any of their respective employees or agents, or sources or other third parties, (b) any recommendation by any EAB Organization, or (c) failure of member and its employees and agents to abide by the terms set forth herein.

EAB is a registered trademark of EAB Global, Inc. in the United States and other countries. Members are not permitted to use these trademarks, or any other trademark, product name, service name, trade name, and logo of any EAB Organization without prior written consent of EAB. Other trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos used within these pages are the property of their respective holders. Use of other company trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos or images of the same does not necessarily constitute (a) an endorsement by such company of an EAB Organization and its products and services, or (b) an endorsement of the company or its products or services by an EAB Organization. No EAB Organization is affiliated with any such company.

IMPORTANT: Please read the following.

EAB has prepared this report for the exclusive use of its members. Each member acknowledges and agrees that this report and the information contained herein (collectively, the "Report") are confidential and proprietary to EAB. By accepting delivery of this Report, each member agrees to abide by the terms as stated herein, including the following:

1. All right, title, and interest in and to this Report is owned by an EAB Organization. Except as stated herein, no right, license, permission, or interest of any kind in this Report is intended to be given, transferred to, or acquired by a member. Each member is authorized to use this Report only to the extent expressly authorized herein.
2. Each member shall not sell, license, republish, distribute, or post online or otherwise this Report, in part or in whole. Each member shall not disseminate or permit the use of, and shall take reasonable precautions to prevent such dissemination or use of, this Report by (a) any of its employees and agents (except as stated below), or (b) any third party.
3. Each member may make this Report available solely to those of its employees and agents who (a) are registered for the workshop or membership program of which this Report is a part, (b) require access to this Report in order to learn from the information described herein, and (c) agree not to disclose this Report to other employees or agents or any third party. Each member shall use, and shall ensure that its employees and agents use, this Report for its internal use only. Each member may make a limited number of copies, solely as adequate for use by its employees and agents in accordance with the terms herein.
4. Each member shall not remove from this Report any confidential markings, copyright notices, and/or other similar indicia herein.
5. Each member is responsible for any breach of its obligations as stated herein by any of its employees or agents.
6. If a member is unwilling to abide by any of the foregoing obligations, then such member shall promptly return this Report and all copies thereof to EAB.

Table of Contents

- 1) Executive Summary 4**
 - Key Observations 4
- 2) Components of the Teacher-Support Coach Role..... 5**
 - Common Coaching Challenges..... 5
 - Personalized Teacher Support 6
 - Supplementary Teacher Support 9
- 3) Coach Management and Stakeholder Support 12**
 - Centralized Coordination 12
 - Evaluation 15
 - Stakeholder Buy-In..... 17
- 4) Research Methodology 19**
 - Project Challenge 19
 - Project Sources 19
 - Research Parameters 20

1) Executive Summary

Key Observations

Offer regular and consistent coaching support to enhance teachers' instruction. Continuity in support allows coaches to build strong mentoring relationships with teachers and personalize coaching strategies to individual teacher needs. For example, coaches at School D and School E work with teachers in months-long coaching cycles to focus on specific areas of instructional improvement. Contacts at School B, School D, and School E recommend assigning coaches to particular school buildings to increase coaches' opportunities to develop relationships with specific groups of teachers.

Offload technology troubleshooting responsibilities to ensure that teacher-support coaches can focus on helping teachers integrate technological tools into existing instructional methods. Often, technology support coaches do not focus only on classroom technology integration as they must spend a great deal of time providing general technology support. Contacts at School C, School E, and School D recommend assigning technology troubleshooting responsibilities to personnel other than teacher-support coaches. This ensures that these coaches can focus on more in-depth instructional technology implementation projects.

Define coaches' administrative responsibilities clearly to prevent administrative tasks from crowding out coaches' teacher-support responsibilities. Multiple stakeholders can request coaches' support on tasks that do not directly enhance teacher instruction. To preserve coaches' time for direct teacher support, district-level administrators at School D create centralized expectations for how coaches spend their time. Specifically, they require coaches to spend 40 percent of their time in coaching cycles with teachers, leaving 60 percent of their time for administrative tasks and professional development.

Standardize the coaching role district-wide to ensure that all teachers receive the same level of support. School-level differences in coaching services and coach trainings can lead to variance in the quality of support provided to teachers across schools. To standardize coaching roles and the type of support coaches provide, district-level staff (e.g., curriculum coordinators, content-area supervisors) at School A, School C, School D, School E, and School F recommend coordinating coaches' work at the district level. District-level administrators at these districts meet with coaches frequently to further standardize coaches' role district-wide.

Garner support for coaches' work through regular communication with key stakeholders and voluntary teacher participation in coaching services. Teachers and principals may often mistakenly view coaches' work as punitive, leading to pushback against coaching services. Contacts at School A, School B, School C, and School D note that regular district-wide communication, which clarifies coaches' role in improving teacher instruction, can ensure buy-in for coaching services from multiple stakeholders. To build teacher support for coaches' work, contacts at School B, School D, and School F recommend having teachers drive their own work with coaches, rather than having administrators mandate the structure of teacher-coach relationships.

2) Components of the Teacher-Support Coach Role

Common Coaching Challenges

Administrators Struggle to Align Coaching Roles with District and School Needs

Teacher-support coaches (e.g., instructional coaches, teacher leaders, technology coaches) deliver general trainings and personalized support to enhance teacher instruction. Administrators also delegate additional responsibilities (e.g., data analysis, technology coaching, direct student intervention) to these coaches to advance district- and school-wide instruction.

To guide coaches' primary teacher-support work, contacts at profiled districts suggest that coaches leverage research-backed coaching techniques. To ensure that school-level administrators do not delegate too many secondary responsibilities to coaches and to preserve coaches' time for direct teacher support, these contacts recommend that district-level administrators define coaches' roles centrally and set clear expectations about how coaches will spend their time.

Regardless of the exact coaching structure used, administrators at contact districts engage coaches through several avenues of professional development and engage other key stakeholders through regular communication to build support for coaches' work.

Overview of Teacher-Support Coaching Structure at Profiled Districts

School	Instructional Coaches
School A <i>Hybrid</i>	• 12 school-based English Language Arts (ELA) coaches serve elementary schools • One district-based ELA coach serves high schools • Two district-based math coaches serve elementary schools and one serves middle and high schools • One district-based science coach serves all schools
School B <i>District-Based</i>	• One district-based math coach and one district-based reading coach serve all schools • Administrators are building a program to employ generalist school-based coaches
School C <i>Hybrid</i>	• Five district-based math coaches serve elementary schools and one serves middle schools • Two district-based and two school-based ELA coaches serve elementary schools • One district-based Lead Instructional Coaching Mentor serves all schools • 19 school-based Instructional Technology Resource Teachers provide technology training and curriculum integration support to other teachers
School D <i>District-based</i>	• Five district-based generalist coaches serve elementary schools and the pre-school center • Four district-based generalist coaches serve middle schools and two serve high schools
School E <i>Hybrid</i>	• 23 school-based generalist coaches serve elementary and middle schools • Two district-based progress monitoring coaches serve high schools • One district-based technology coach serves all schools
School F <i>District-based</i>	• Two district-based ELA coaches serve elementary schools • Four district-based math coaches serve elementary schools • Two Title I ELA coaches serve seven Title I elementary schools

Offer Sustained One-on-One Coaching to Maximize Impact on Teacher Instruction

Effective instructional coaching promotes personalized coaching techniques and relationship-building.¹ Thus, administrators should design coaching models that maximize one-on-one coaching to improve teacher performance.

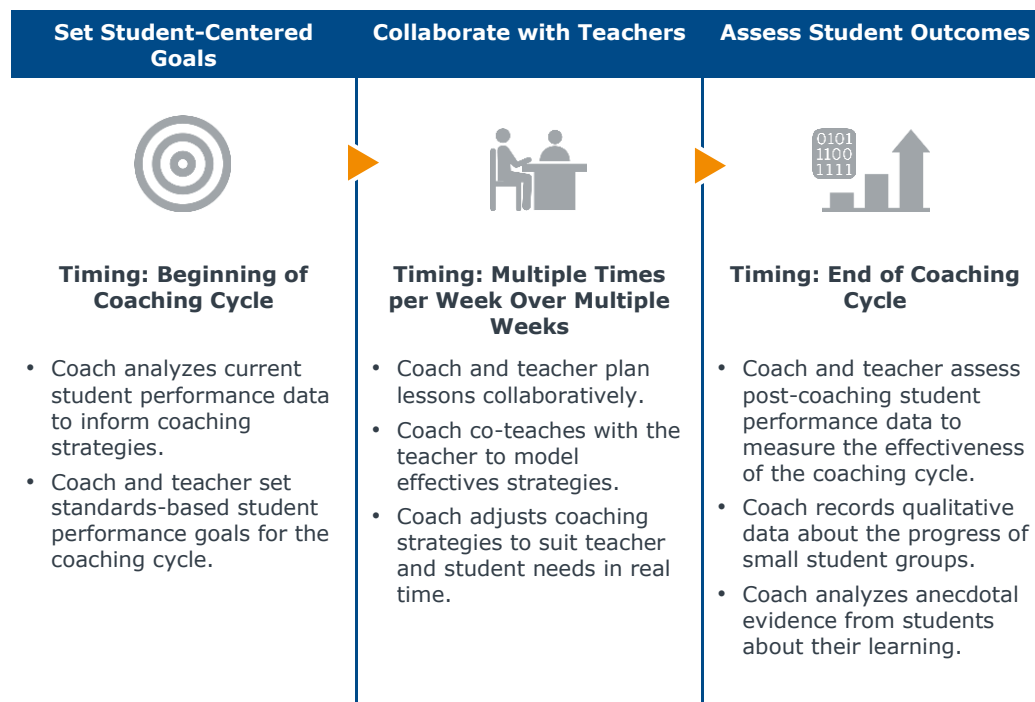
Administrators at profiled districts help coaches develop relationships with teachers by assigning coaches to work with specific schools and by using intensive coaching cycles for individual teachers.

Contacts at School B, School D, and School E recommend using school-specific coaches. Using school-specific coaches helps coaches develop relationships with that school's teachers and gives teachers an opportunity to seek informal and unscheduled support as needed.

To accommodate budget constraints preventing administrators from employing coaches who each serve an individual school, coaches at School A and School C rotate between buildings based upon teacher needs. Coaches at School A visit five schools in a week, spending one day at each building. Coaches at School C have the flexibility to design their own rotational schedule to best suit school-wide teacher needs. Typically, they cover four schools each month.

Coaches can also leverage intensive coaching cycles to build ongoing relationships with individual teachers. In these cycles, coaches work with teachers to improve a specific area of instruction over an extended period of time. For example, coaches at both School D and School E use coaching cycles that span from a few weeks to a few months. Administrators at School D note that coaching cycles' collaborative, teacher-led, and measurable structure maximizes their effectiveness.

Stages of Coaching Cycles at *School D*²



¹ Britnie Delinger Kane and Brooks Rosenquist, "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations," *American Educational Research Journal* 56, no. 5 (October 1, 2019): 1718–68, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219826580>.

² Diane Sweeney, "Student-Centered Coaching Cycles by Diane Sweeney," June 17, 2019, <https://dianesweeney.com/student-centered-coaching-cycles-by-diane-sweeney/>.

Coach Teachers on Pedagogy, Rather Than Content, to Maximize Support Effectiveness

Research indicates that sustained coaching of instructional delivery can improve teachers' instructional effectiveness.³ All coaches at School B, School D, and School E and ELA coaches at School A and School F focus on coaching teachers' general pedagogy. This allows coaches to lean on broader instructional strategies that teachers can transfer across subject areas, instead of discipline-specific strategies.

Administrators at School B, School D, and School E recommend creating generalist coach positions (rather than discipline-specific positions) to ensure that coaches can develop expertise in general instructional best practices, rather than discipline-specific tactics. Further, employing generalist coaches also encourages teachers to consult the same coach for multiple challenges, allowing them to build strong relationships with coaches over time.

Leverage In-Classroom Coaching Opportunities to Develop Teachers' Skills

For more information on how instructional coaches can support teachers, please see our report [Maximizing the Effectiveness of Instructional Coaches](#).

Research suggests that successful coaching supports teachers in rehearsing their instruction as well as in analyzing student response to instruction.⁴ To make these types of opportunities available, coaches at all six profiled districts provide in-classroom support to teachers, through opportunities such as instructional modeling and co-teaching. Contacts at profiled districts note the value of these practices in supporting teacher growth.

At School B, School C, and School E, coaches observe teacher instruction in classrooms and later provide personalized feedback and improvement strategies. Administrators at School C emphasize that teachers benefit significantly from this reflection time with coaches.

At School B, administrators suggest using coaches to serve as substitute teachers, so that teachers in need of support can observe instructional techniques of exemplar teachers during the school day.

Supplement Coaches' Support with Support from Experienced Teachers to Navigate Budgetary Constraints

In cases where budgetary constraints limit the number of coaches available to collaborate with teachers, administrators at School A, School C, School D, and School E use experienced teachers to provide supplemental support (e.g., onboarding, technology training, initial classroom support) to other teachers in need of assistance.

The coach-teachers at School C and School E use release times to provide coaching support. However, the coach-teachers at School C can also work with school-level administrators to coach during class times and arrange for a substitute teacher to teach their regular classes.

³ David Blazar and Matthew A. Kraft, "Exploring Mechanisms of Effective Teacher Coaching: A Tale of Two Cohorts From a Randomized Experiment," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, December 1, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373715579487>.

⁴ Kane and Rosenquist, "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations."

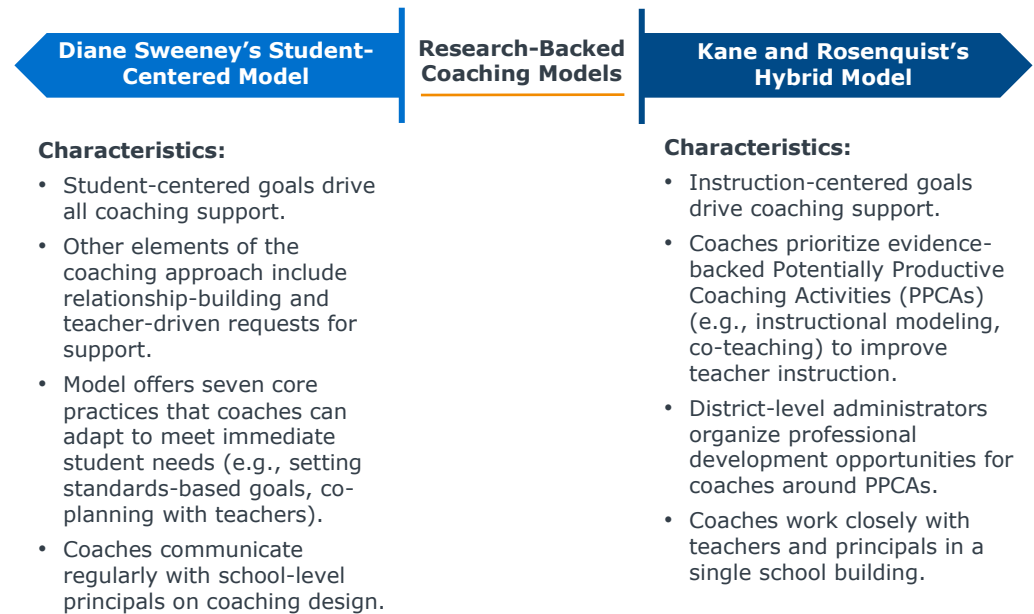
Customize Research-Based Coaching Models to Suit School-Level Needs

To guide the coaching process, administrators often rely on existing research-backed coaching structures. However, administrators at School A and School B recommend adjusting these more general structures to align with unique district-specific or school-specific needs.

For instance, administrators at School D structure their coaches according to [Diane Sweeney](#)'s coaching model, which focuses on increasing student achievement, rather than remediating underperforming teachers.⁵ As a result, coaches and teachers at School D set coaching goals around student achievement and measure progress by tracking student outcomes.

Alternatively, Kane and Rosenquist suggest a teacher-centric approach to coaching, where support focuses on growth in teachers' instructional success. The model includes both district-driven professional development for coaches and school-specific coaching assignments.⁶

Research-Backed Teacher-Support Coaching Structures⁷



⁵ Diane Sweeney, "Getting Started with Student-Centered Coaching," *Diane Sweeney* (blog), n.d., <https://dianesweeney.com/getting-started-with-student-centered-coaching/>.

⁶ Kane and Rosenquist, "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations."

⁷ Diane Sweeney, "Getting Started with Student-Centered Coaching"; Kane and Rosenquist, "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations."

Supplementary Teacher Support

Provide Opportunities for Coaches to Scale Support to Larger Groups of Teachers

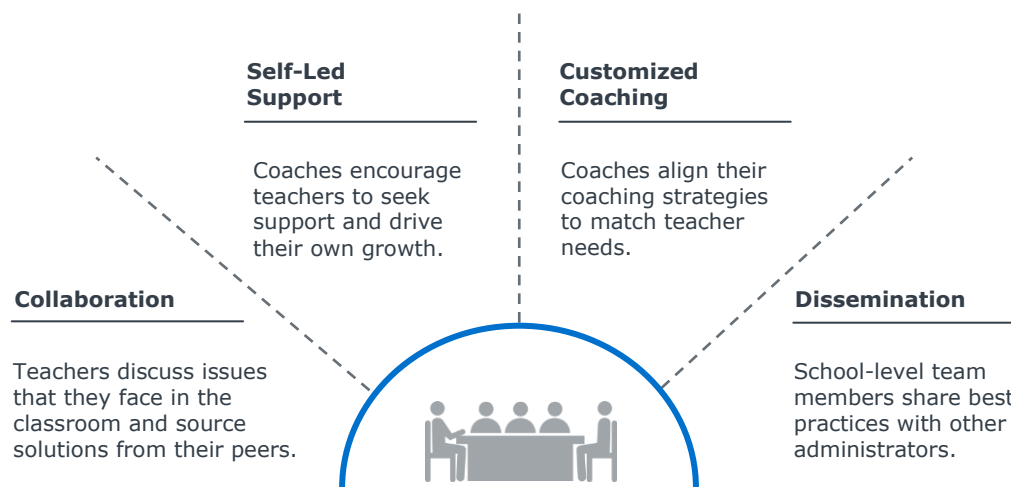
In addition to providing one-on-one teacher support, coaches can also lead teacher collaboration and skill-building in small groups. This allows coaches to support large-scale support needs efficiently.

Coaches at all six profiled districts collaborate with groups of teachers and provide skill trainings. At School A, School C, School D, and School E, coaches and small groups of peer teachers (i.e., teachers in the same discipline or at the same grade level) analyze student performance data (e.g., internal assessment results, state assessment results). They identify common gaps in students' content mastery, and coaches provide instructional resources to bridge those gaps.

Math and ELA coaches at School C review student data with teachers during common planning meetings. Coaches and teachers at School C also meet for an hour after school twice each month to analyze standardized test results. These efforts help inform future coaching strategies.

Since PLC meetings address too many other topics (e.g., reviewing test score data), contacts at School B recommend creating a separate structure for comprehensive data analysis and collaboration between coaches and teachers. To this end, contacts at School B plan for peer teachers, librarians, specialized staff, and coaches to meet twice per month to discuss broader instructional concerns.

Goals for Instructional Innovation Team Meetings at *School B*



Coaches at all six profiled districts also facilitate professional development trainings for groups of teachers. School C schedule regular after-school training sessions in addition to sessions during the school day. Coaches at School A lead skill trainings during PLC meetings. Further, coaches at School D leverage the district's professional development funding to support instructional innovation. Coaches use these resources to implement teacher-sourced instructional ideas and train other teachers on these ideas.

Focus Technology Coaching on Full-Scale Implementation of Technological Tools, Rather Than on General Technology Troubleshooting

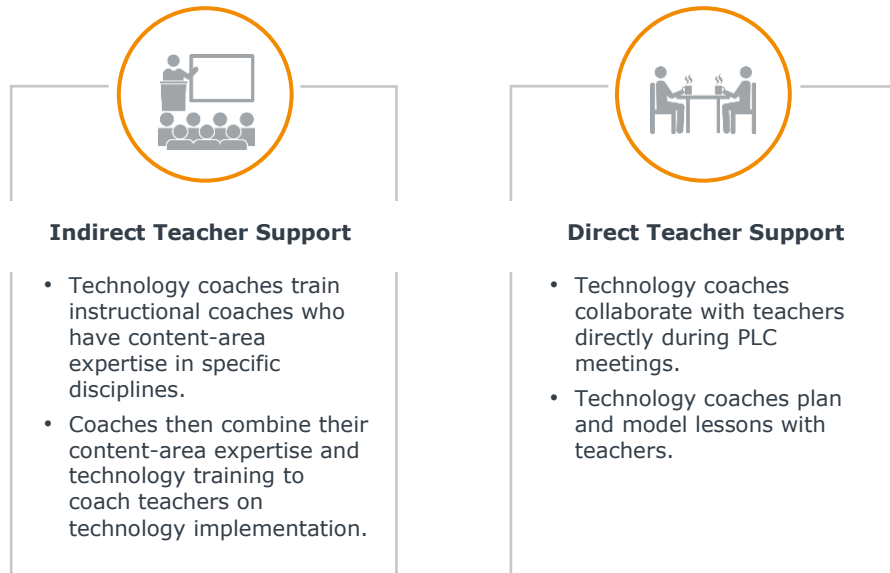
Only School D, School E (grades 2-12), and School F support 1:1 technology initiatives.

Administrators often struggle to use technology coaches effectively—they may overburden coaches by asking them to provide general support for the use of classroom technologies.⁸ This leaves coaches with minimal time to help teachers leverage technology for innovative classroom experiences. To maximize the effectiveness of technology coaches, administrators can design coaching models that focus specifically on integrating technological tools into classroom content delivery.⁹

Administrators at School C, School E, and School D recommend assigning technology troubleshooting responsibilities to personnel other than coaches. This allows technology coaches to prioritize efforts that help teachers integrate technology into instruction over general technology support.

Furthermore, research shows that individualized coaching plans can help teachers become better users of technology in the classroom. To facilitate the delivery of individualized coaching plans, administrators can use technology coaches either to provide direct teacher support, or to teach other coaches how to assist in classroom technology integration. These coaches can then disseminate lessons to all teachers.¹⁰

Alternative Technology Coaching Approaches¹¹



Following the indirect teacher support approach, contacts at School D recommend that technology experts train generalist coaches on assisting teachers in embedding technology into classroom instruction. In addition, this structure encourages teachers to manage simple technology troubleshooting themselves.

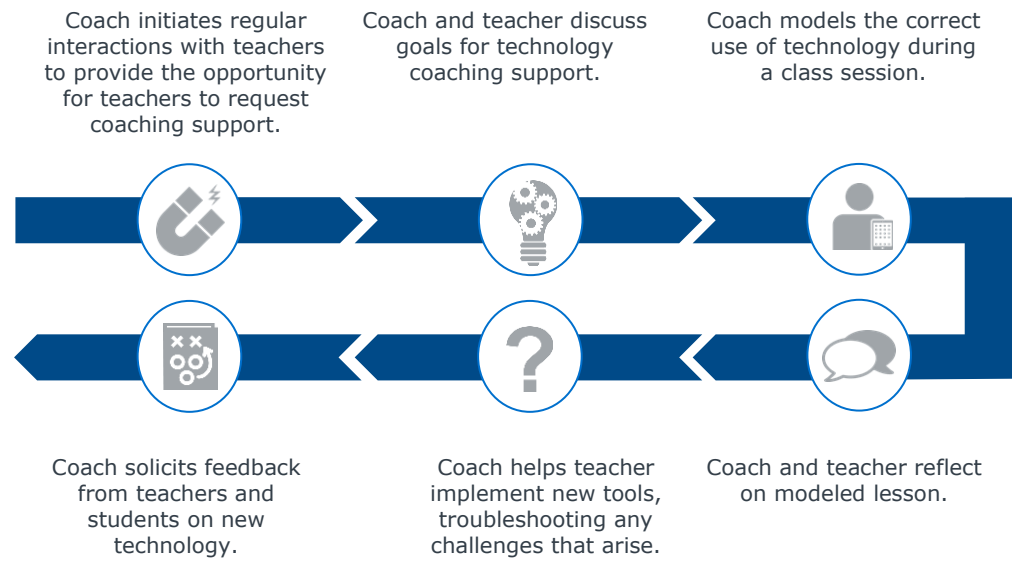
⁸ Virginia Department of Education, "Instructional Technology Resource Teacher," July 2008, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/technology/administrators_teachers_staff/teacher_guidelines.pdf.

⁹ Tina Ehsanipour and Florencia Gomez Zaccarelli, "Exploring Coaching for Powerful Technology Use in Education," July 2017, 18.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ehsanipour and Zaccarelli, "Exploring Coaching for Powerful Technology Use in Education."

Elements of Effective Technology Coaching¹²



¹² Matthew X. Joseph and Erin Fisher, "The 6 Fundamentals of Technology Coaching," EdTech, n.d., <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2018/06/6-fundamentals-technology-coaching>.

3) Coach Management and Stakeholder Support

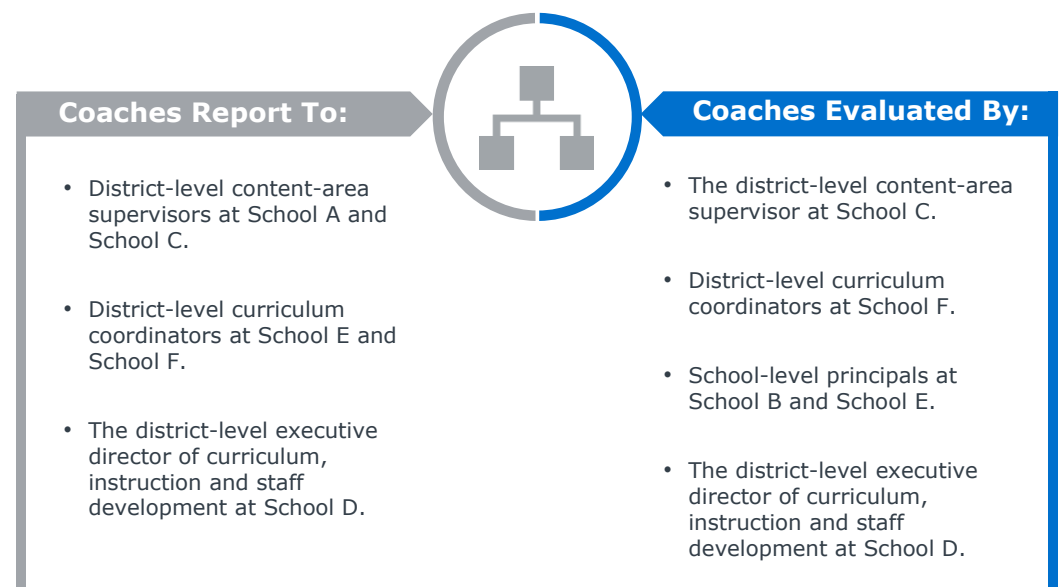
Centralized Coordination

Manage Coaches Centrally to Ensure All Teachers Receive Consistent Support

School-level administrators often vary in their preferred use of teacher-support coaches to serve school-wide needs. This variation may lead to coaches providing different types of support to teachers at different schools. To ensure all teachers receive consistent, high-quality coaching support, contacts at all six profiled districts emphasize the value of centralizing management of coaches at the district level.

District-level staff (e.g., curriculum coordinators, content-area supervisors) at School A, School C, School D, School E, and School F oversee the districts' teacher-support coaches. By reporting to these district-level administrators, coaches receive centralized direction that increases the uniformity of coaching services across the district. For example, at School C, a lead instructional coaching mentor coordinates coaching services between district-based coaches and school-based leaders.

Sample Reporting and Evaluation Structures at Profiled Districts



Provide District-Driven Professional Development to Ensure Consistent Support for Coaches

Contacts at all six profiled districts emphasize that regular, district-directed professional development opportunities for coaches promote consistency in coaches' methods and ensure coaches feel supported by district-level administrators.

District-level administrators at School A, School C, School E, and School F meet with coaches frequently (e.g., weekly, monthly) to set common expectations about coaching services and to develop coaching strategies. Administrators at School C meet with coaches one-on-one as needed. Often, coaches meet with administrators informally multiple times in a week.

Administrators at School C, School D, School E, and School F also incorporate skill-building trainings for coaches into regular coach-administrator meeting times. Since

Administrators at School E mandate that coaches spend one full day per week completing district-directed professional development and planning.

school-level administrators may only work with a small subset of coaches, they cannot easily provide large-scale professional development opportunities for coaches. In contrast, designated district-level staff can ensure appropriate structure and funding supports these trainings.



Supplement District-Provided Professional Development Offerings with External Trainings

Administrators at School D and School F allow coaches to attend trainings organized by external facilitators, but ensure that these trainings have clear pathways to impact teacher performance and student outcomes.

Coaches at School D can only attend external skill development sessions with teachers who need these trainings for their own growth. Curriculum coordinators at School F typically accompany coaches to external trainings.

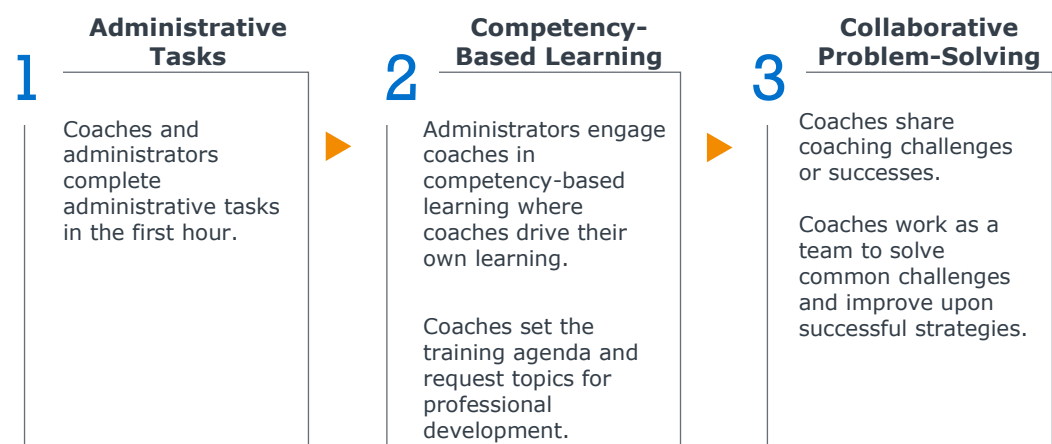
Design Collaborative Professional Development Sessions to Increase Coach Effectiveness

School-based generalist coaches or content-specific coaches may exist in siloes that prevent collaboration and best-practice sourcing with their colleagues. Coaches also may not have access to latest research in classroom instruction. To provide more opportunities for idea-sharing among coaches, administrators at all six profiled districts highlight the value of building collaboration into coaches' professional development opportunities.

This ensures coaches work as a team to provide peer-sourced and centrally-approved coaching support to teachers. For example, district-level administrators at School E and School F meet with coaches weekly to problem-solve challenges and share useful resources as a team. At School D, district-level administrators lead similar collaborative meetings twice per month.

Three-Part Agenda for District-Directed Collaborative Meetings at School D

The district-level coach supervisor meets with coaches for three-hour sessions twice each month.



At School D, district-level administrators also meet with coaches for two days at the end of each semester to reflect on coaching cycles. Coaches share success stories and hurdles from the coaching cycles they completed with teachers. Coaches also communicate updates about their workload, including the split between their administrative and teacher support responsibilities over the course of the semester.

Lastly, district-level administrators at School D provide opportunities for coaches to provide personalized support to each other. Specifically, administrators invite two to three coaches to observe and provide feedback on other coaches' work once per semester. Contacts report that coaches highly value this team observation, debrief, and collaborative discussion, as it allows them all to focus on improving their coaching cooperatively.

Collaborate with Coaches to Analyze Student Performance Data for Instructional Planning

Administrators can facilitate collaboration between coaches to analyze student achievement data and align coaching strategies to student needs.

Administrators and coaches at School A work together to look at trends in student data, plan professional development for new teachers, and plan grade-wide initiatives (e.g., an independent reading program). Similarly, administrators at School E and School F also review student performance data (e.g., results of STAR reading and math assessments, results of internal assessments, state benchmarks, student classroom activity) with coaches to inform coaching strategy development.

Clearly Define Coaches' Administrative Responsibilities to Preserve Time for Direct Teacher Support

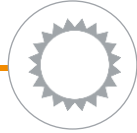
Budget constraints may lead administrators to expand the scope of coaches' work to include administrative responsibilities. For example, coaches at School B and School F support district-wide curriculum planning and data analysis to inform coaching strategies.

That said, these administrative tasks may leave coaches with only 25 to 30 percent of their time to work with teachers.¹³ While coaches can provide valuable administrative services, delegation from school-level administrators can limit coaches' time available for impactful work supporting teachers directly. To preserve coaches' time for teacher support, administrators at profiled districts set clear expectations for coaches' administrative responsibilities at the district level.

To ensure that coaches allocate enough time for direct teacher support, administrators can dictate how coaches should divide their time between different types of responsibilities. Administrators can also allot time for coaches to complete administrative responsibilities outside the academic year, preserving time for teacher support during the school year.

¹³ Kane and Rosenquist, "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations."

Strategies to Minimize Conflicts Between Coaches' Administrative and Direct Coaching Responsibilities



Using Time Outside the Academic Year for Administrative Tasks

At School B, School C, and School E, coach employment contracts typically mirror the districts' teacher contracts, encompassing the standard academic year.

- Administrators at School A, School D, and School E compensate coaches for additional days worked over the summer.
- During these days, coaches support district-level and school-level administrative needs (e.g., planning professional development sessions, updating curricula to align with state standards).



Placing Time Limits on Administrative Responsibilities

- District-level administrators at School D require coaches to spend 40 percent of their time in coaching cycles with teachers.
- Coaches can use the rest of their time (i.e., 60 percent) for administrative tasks and professional development.



Employing Personnel for Administrative Support

- Administrators at School E employ progress monitoring coaches to lead data-focused conversations with teachers and district administrators.
- These coaches automatically reduce the administrative burden on teacher-support coaches.

Evaluation

Leverage Diverse Evaluation Tools to Measure Coach Efficacy and Emphasize Performance Goals

Administrators at School E evaluate coaches multiple times during the year. Administrators conduct one long and two short evaluations during a semester. Administrators also conduct a summative evaluation at the end of the school year.

Administrators cannot always trace the direct impact of coaching services on teacher and student outcomes. Since multiple factors affect student performance, assessment data and similar benchmarks cannot measure coach efficacy accurately.

To attempt to highlight coaches' impact holistically, administrators at profiled districts use a diverse array of qualitative measures of coach performance (e.g., coaching observations, teacher feedback surveys).

For example, administrators at School C solicit teacher feedback on instructional coaching through surveys. The feedback data gathered through these surveys inform changes to coaching strategies and helps administrators advocate for hiring additional coaches.

Effective evaluation processes also outline clear performance goals for coaches. This ensures that coaches understand the definition of success in their role, making it easier for coaches to operate effectively. For instance, administrators at School C, School D, School E, and School F use evaluation rubrics based on established best practices and customize them to district- or school-specific goals. Administrators at School C and School F use these district-defined goals when evaluating coaches through observation of their work with teachers.

Criteria Used to Evaluate Coaches' Performance at Profiled Districts¹⁴



Involve Coaches in the Development of Performance Evaluation Processes to Build a Sense of Ownership Over Their Professional Success

Administrators at School C and School D use evaluation processes that increase coaches' ownership over the measurement of their performance. Administrators encourage coaches to set their own performance goals and evaluate coaches based upon these goals. This can ensure that coaches feel a sense of investment in their performance goals, increasing their motivation to reach these performance benchmarks. School D uses an evaluation model developed by Diane Sweeney that asks for coaches' input throughout the evaluation process.

¹⁴ Sourced from coach evaluation models at School C, School D, School E, and School F, and teacher feedback survey at School C.

Goal-Setting and Coach Evaluation Process at *School D*



Stakeholder Buy-In

Encourage Teachers to Direct Participation with Coaches to Increase Their Engagement with Coaching Services

Research shows that teachers' voluntary participation with coaching services correlates positively with improvement in teacher instruction. Coaches build better mentoring relationships with teachers when teachers can make their own decisions related to coaching support.¹⁵ Thus, contacts at School B, School D, and School F recommend that administrators encourage teachers to drive their own support, rather than mandate how teachers work with coaches.

To this end, administrators at School D do not allow principals to refer teachers for coaching support. Instead, administrators encourage an opt-in model where teachers can reach out to coaches directly to access support. At School F, principals can require that teachers schedule time with coaches but cannot reach out to coaches directly to facilitate these conversations.

Further, contacts at School B and School D recommend that principals offer coaching services as one of many support options, instead of mandating coaching as the sole option for teachers in need of assistance. For instance, when principals at School D and School F place teachers on performance improvement plans, teachers can choose to access coaching support as one of many ways to fulfill the requirements of their plan. This policy helps encourage teacher to view coaching as a supportive, rather than a punitive, option.

However, in some instances, administrators need to mandate coaching participation among struggling and resistant teachers. To minimize teacher resistance in these situations, contacts at School A, School B, School E, and School F recommend that principals clearly define and communicate the method used to select teachers for coaching support. For example, principals at School A, School B, and School F identify teachers for coaching support based on classroom observations and teacher performance evaluation scores. Clearly communicating these processes to teachers ensures that teachers' selection for coaching support does not surprise them.

¹⁵ Matthew A. Kraft, David Blazar, and Dylan Hogan, "The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence," *Review of Educational Research* 88, no. 4 (August 2018): 547–88, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318759268>.

Communicate Regularly with School-Level Stakeholders to Enhance Their Understanding of Coaches' Work

School-level administrators (e.g., principals) can either elevate or obstruct the impact of coaching on teacher and student outcomes.¹⁶ If principals understand coaches' purpose, they can ensure coaches focus on activities that directly serve this purpose. To help school-level administrators understand the value of coaches, district-level administrators can regularly explain coaches' work to school-level administrators and involve school-level administrators in decision-making processes related to coaching services.

District-level administrators can communicate about the importance of coaches' work at regular meetings with school-level administrators. District-level administrators can either meet with school-level administrators specifically to discuss coaching or invite them to broader district-wide meetings that address coaching services. For example, district-level administrators at School C and School D meet with principals specifically to explain district-approved uses for coaches. District-level administrators at School D also train new principals on how to use coaches effectively.

Contacts at School A, School B, School C, and School D recommend involving school-level administrators in district-wide decision-making related to coaching services (e.g., collaborative conversations used to align coaching services with district-wide goals). Considering feedback from school-level administrators who often best understand school-specific needs develops these administrators' sense of investment in coaches' success.

To facilitate these feedback conversations, administrators at School B invite principals to coaches' professional development trainings, while administrators at School D require coaches to meet with their principals once a week.

However, contacts at School B, School D, and School F recommend that coaches and principals do not discuss feedback related to specific teachers. When teachers trust that their work with coaches will remain largely confidential, they will more readily seek out coaches' support.

¹⁶ Kane and Rosenquist, "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations."

4) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member district approached the Forum with the following questions:

- What is the current structure for teacher-support coaching at contact districts?
 - What types of coaches do contact districts employ?
- What challenges do administrators at contact districts associate with their current coaching organizational model?
 - How do administrators navigate these challenges?
- What is the typical employment contract structure for coaches at contact districts?
- What types of services do coaches provide to teachers at contact districts?
- How do coaches help teachers implement classroom technologies?
 - What types of technology initiatives do contact districts support?
- How do principals at contact districts collaborate with both district-level administrators and school-level teachers to provide coaching support to teachers?
- How do coaches at contact districts collaborate across content areas and disciplines to support teachers holistically?
- What process do administrators at contact districts use to evaluate teacher-support coaches?
- What specific metrics do contact districts monitor to measure the impact of coaches?
- What ongoing professional development opportunities do contact districts offer to coaches to increase their impact on student achievement and teaching effectiveness?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- Blazar, David, and Matthew A. Kraft. "Exploring Mechanisms of Effective Teacher Coaching: A Tale of Two Cohorts From a Randomized Experiment." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, December 1, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373715579487>.
- Sweeney, Diane. "Getting Started with Student-Centered Coaching." *Diane Sweeney* (blog), n.d. <https://dianesweeney.com/getting-started-with-student-centered-coaching/>.
- Sweeney, Diane. "Student-Centered Coaching Cycles by Diane Sweeney," June 17, 2019. <https://dianesweeney.com/student-centered-coaching-cycles-by-diane-sweeney/>.
- Ehsanipour, Tina, and Florencia Gomez Zaccarelli. "Exploring Coaching for Powerful Technology Use in Education," July 2017, 18.
- EAB. "Maximizing the Effectiveness of Instructional Coaches," 2019. <https://eab.com/research/district-leadership/resource/maximizing-the-effectiveness-of-instructional-coaches/>.
- Joseph, Matthew X., and Erin Fisher. "The 6 Fundamentals of Technology Coaching." *EdTech*, n.d. <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2018/06/6-fundamentals-technology-coaching>.

- Kane, Britnie Delinger, and Brooks Rosenquist. "Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations." *American Educational Research Journal* 56, no. 5 (October 1, 2019): 1718–68. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219826580>.
- Kraft, Matthew A., David Blazar, and Dylan Hogan. "The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence." *Review of Educational Research* 88, no. 4 (August 2018): 547–88. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318759268>.
- Virginia Department of Education. "Instructional Technology Resource Teacher," July 2008. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/technology/administrators_teachers_staff/teacher_guidelines.pdf.

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed administrators who work with teacher-support coaches at low-poverty suburban or rural school districts that enroll between 11,000 and 21,000 students.

A Guide to Districts Profiled in this Brief

District	Location	Approximate Enrollment
School A	Mid-Atlantic	11,300
School B	Midwest	17,900
School C	Mid-Atlantic	11,100
School D	Midwest	12,000
School E	Midwest	16,400
School F	Midwest	20,500