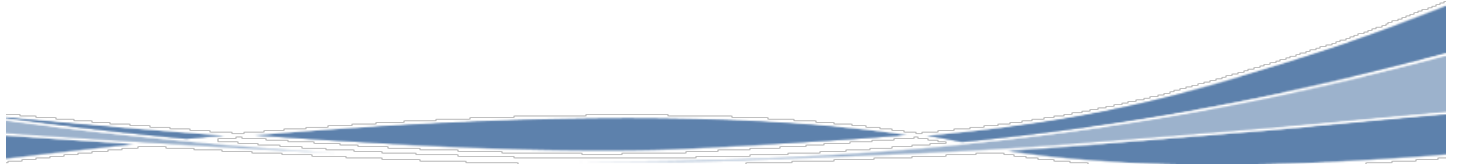# Instructional Coaching Review

Final Report for Cambridge Public Schools

MAK Mitchell, Ed.D.

Primary Investigator

Principal, Consensus Now! LLC

CONSENSUS NOW!

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Background of the Study

This report is a response to a Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) request for proposals issued in January 2014. Upon completion of the competitive bid process, Consensus Now! was selected to conduct the program review. We are an independent LLC focused on delivering external reviews, practice recommendations and training focused on instructional coaching and other levers for raising student achievement.

Purposes of the Study

The district is seeking a review in order to determine whether the coaching model, as designed and implemented is leading to desired improvements in teaching and learning.

Therefore, the purpose of the Instructional Coaching Review is to collect baseline data in order to provide:

- Exhibited strengths of the school coaching program over the past ten years

- Findings and recommendations for strengthening future instructional coach delivery through examination of school levers: structures, practices, consistency, and/or use of time

- Findings and recommendations for growing the level of coach capacity and level of agency to more effectively execute coach roles and facilitate PLC's at the school level.

- Findings and recommendations for improving instructional impact of coaching models at the school level, particularly for those in need of intervention.

- Parallel recommendations for effective district level support of coaching through staffing, reporting, job descriptions, staff development and benchmarks.

Study Methods

The report is based on several sources of ethnographic baseline data: interviews with relevant central administrators, district coaches, coordinators and school principals as well as a K-8 teacher survey and field observations of teachers and coaches in action in classrooms and while serving on their school PLC. We also examined school achievement data and coach schedules as artifacts to inform our interviews and observations.

Our intent is to use the neutrality of ethnographic methods and protocols to reveal the strengths and needs of the current coaching implementation and to express them in a set of practical recommendations. By focusing on both school and district levels and enlisting the support of relevant research findings, we hope to gain insight into how to create a more systemic response that goes beyond individual program modifications and enhancements.

School Level Findings and Recommendations:

The major school level findings and themes that emerged from the data are coupled with explanatory evidence and parallel recommendations.

Authentic Teaching and Learning

Finding: CPS instructional staff maintained a steady preference for authentic teaching and learning throughout this era of increased accountability, but did not pursue strategies to take it to scale.

Evidence: Unlike other urban districts pressured by external mandates, CPS resisted narrowing the content and reducing student performance to metrics alone. They championed building authentic instructional capacity of teachers individually, but the implementation was not designed to build teams of teachers in a school or to take strong practices to scale across schools.

Recommendation: Continue the focus on building authentic instructional capacity, but now with attention to conditions of learning that scale: support school teams of teachers and share positive practices across schools.

Pedagogic Priority

Finding: CPS coaches and principals exhibited an emerging readiness to prioritize pedagogy over content.

Evidence: School level interviews and observations revealed a readiness for a shift in priorities from content coaching to pedagogic coaching. The creation of a rigorous content curriculum aligned to Common Core is due to be completed by 2016. This curricular resource decreases the pressure on coaches and teachers to design lessons based on original content since the district plans to provide easy access to online resources created by teachers and for teachers. It also allows coaches and teachers to focus on pedagogic methods that will increase differentiation and achievement across the diverse learners in CPS. Rather than two content coaches per school with highly dispersed schedules, one pedagogic coach with a schedule focused exclusively on instructional delivery is more likely to produce a more positive impact on student learning.

Recommendation: Assure the full adoption of and teacher access to the new curriculum; shift the role of the school coach from content to pedagogy and exchange the two content coaches for one pedagogic coach per school.

Student Centric Purpose

Finding: The early purpose of coaching in CPS was teacher development through content-driven professional development; recent teacher priorities for coaching are emerging as more student centric, focused on differentiated data for student mastery.

Evidence: The early implementation of coaching in CPS was designed as a professional development response focused on teachers who felt inadequately trained in content by their university certification programs. Recent teacher priorities for coaching are in the process of switching to student-centered purposes, calling for a balance of data driven lessons creatively designed and delivered to differentiate to student needs and raise student achievement.

Recommendation: Support teachers and coaches in school-based pedagogical strategies to differentiate data-driven instruction.

Grade Level Teams

Finding: CPS student data calls for more student differentiation, yet the use of team coaching as a strategy is limited by school schedules with inadequate common planning time and is diminished by lack of staff understanding about its power to deliver differentiated lessons.

Evidence: The academic performance metrics of CPS students and their increasing diversity reveal that they would benefit from a more efficient differentiated teaching approach. Recent coaching research and practice studies reveal that grade level teams facilitated by a pedagogic coach during common planning time are uniquely positioned to accelerate student learning. Teams address the needs of all students by addressing common priorities through collaboratively designed differentiated lessons.

School coaches resort to cycle and rotational schedules for team meetings and most coaches spend the majority of their time working with individual teachers. The result is that teachers in most CPS schools count only a few customized contacts per year with their coach, often limiting the positive impact of coaching on students.

Recommendation: Institute common planning time and grade level teams in schools facilitated by a pedagogical coach. The majority of coach time should be spent on team facilitation and support.

One on Ones

Finding: One on ones between a single coach and teacher are the primary way coaches spend their time now. The coach/teacher contact ratios are low because it is an individualized and labor-intensive process; it is not an efficient way to routinely impact all the teachers or students in the building.

Evidence: One on ones in CPS schools are meetings between a school coach and individual teacher, usually focused on planning, delivering and/or debriefing a customized lesson to a specific student audience. One on ones offer effective ways of modeling new instructional strategies, but they are limited to impacting a single teacher at a time and they are laborious for coaches to design, deliver and debrief.

Recommendation: Reduce the number of one on ones, but use each one as a way to illustrate a team designed lesson. This modeling becomes more powerful when it is offered as feedback about how a commonly designed lesson was delivered in one classroom.

Intervention

Finding: The use of school coaches to deliver classes to students in need of intervention has not been effective; coaches lack diagnosis training for special populations and the time expenditure diminishes coach leverage in high impact activities such as team and one on one coaching.

Evidence: Our interviews and observations on current intervention practices of school coaches revealed that they are using 10%-40% of their coach time to deliver direct group or individual instruction to students, with the highest percentages of time spent at the Upper School level because of larger numbers of intervention students. We also learned that many coaches, teachers and administrators do not perceive themselves as having the specialized diagnostic training to customize instruction to meet these student needs.

The addition of an interventionist to the grade level/content teams would assure that expert diagnosis occurs as part of the differentiated lesson planning. Interventionists participating in the teamwork can deliver pullout or push-in instruction so that each pedagogic coach could focus 100% of their time on facilitating teams, coaching one-on-ones and observing commonly designed lessons and constructing opportunities for feedback to the grade level team of designers.

Recommendation: Redeploy school based interventionists as participating grade level team members; they lead the diagnosis and delivery plan for each intervention student on the grade level team. In some cases they can deliver the instruction to small groups, in other cases the intervention student is included in the common lesson taught by the regular teacher, but with a differentiated activity.

Principal Leadership

Finding: Principal interviews revealed a desire to fully supervise the coach residing in their building, while coach interviews simultaneously reinforced their need to work with an involved and accountable instructional leader. Some principals were open to leading a school-based Professional Learning Community (PLC) as opposed to the current Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) structure.

Evidence: Recent PLC research reveals that leading an active school PLC causes principals to facilitate more high impact coach strategies: they supervise and schedule coaches with adequate common planning time, they deliver school goals by working in concert the coach and they involve teachers in meaningful collaborations and professional development aligned to Common Core. PLC studies reveal that as head of the PLC, the principal often negotiates resources from central district sources to accomplish school goals.

Recommendation: Assign school coaches wholly to principals for supervision. Offer research-based training to principals and coaches about how to implement a successful Professional Learning Community structure.

District Level Findings and Implications

Nature of District Support

Finding: A school-centric preference in the nature of district support emerged from central staff, principal and coach interviews.

Evidence: The district is already proactively moving in this direction, as evidenced by comments of central staff members who are seeking ways to provide just-in-time online resources rather than instigating an array

of live, time bound central trainings. District leaders and principals also expressed the need to coordinate diverse PD efforts into one menu, driven by aligned district and school goals and funding capacity.

Recommendation: Continue the development of central support services customized to school needs. Sources of new district digital resources useful to coaching might include: curriculum lessons and units, customized student data for use of grade level teams, videos of teachers dellvering team designed lessons and intervention supports.

Central Role Shifts

Findings: The interviews with coaches, principals and central administrators converged on the need to redesign coordinator positions as the key link between the school and central resources. These same interviews suggested that the district coach positions were redundant and no longer deemed essential as.

Implications: The roles of the district coaches and coordinators will need to be redefined in light of coach and principal role changes at the school level. A fair exchange should be instituted between schools and central office: More school autonomy is earned by schools through an exchange for student achievement; schools and their leaders are gradually released from central requirements as student outcomes are achieved.

Recommendations: As the new curriculum becomes more accessible to all, redesign coordinator positions as a key link to customized resources such as curricular content, school data, and instructional videos. Eliminate district coaching roles but institute a benchmarked system to assure gradual release of schools from district dependencies.

Conclusion

Although the early implementation of coaching in CPS established a clear rationale and purpose for coaching, the implementation over time was neither systemic nor aligned with measureable district outcomes. Today's CPS coaching program is an accumulation of many smart, well-intentioned purposes lacking an implementation that reinforces the connections between them. Hence, the district's significant effort, talent and resources are not producing the desired results, particularly for the lower third of the students in Language Arts disciplines. The coach staffing, reporting and communication structure is not currently maximized to produce positive student achievement gains, primarily because it was constructed over time, and layered with individual rather than systemic intentions, unconnected to a shared vision of achievement expectations for coaching. The recommendations of this report address what is needed to convert these findings into a coherent and efficient system that produces high impact learning for all students.

The report is full of descriptive supporting evidence and recommendations, derived from interviews, observations or the teacher survey. Research is cited whenever relevant as a reinforcing source. The

documented patterns of interaction emerge as a series of valuable micro-insights and guidance that increase the chances of a more connected systemic coaching implementation.

Specific actionable recommendations that respond to multiple findings are detailed in the last chapter as a resource for administrators. A benchmarked framework of expectations is suggested as a way to scaffold schools into the new system. If the recommendations and framework are put in place together and if the school-based PLC's become the primary school based coordination meeting for all instructional decisions and best practice, the new system will emerge as strong and sustainable with the desired district achievement gains.

INTRODUCTION

In January of 2014 Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) requested an evaluation of the district's coaching model with specific attention to the structures, use of time, practices, consistency, and effectiveness of the model as it relates to instructional coaching occurring in the district's JK-12 schools. CPS is seeking this evaluation to determine whether its coaching model, as designed and implemented, is leading to desired improvements in teaching and learning. This proposal responds to the district's current state of coaching implementation and what is known from research and practice about the potential of instructional coaching as a strategy for improving teaching and learning.

Our team is purposefully designed to surpass the traditional evaluation team because of our ability to creatively reveal interactional problems, to use descriptive methods to document them and to make recommendations in the form of useable knowledge, i.e., practical insights to increase student achievement and strengthen conditions of learning in Cambridge Public Schools.

History

The way something starts has everything to do with how it turns out. Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) had the foresight to implement a district-wide coaching strategy in the late 1990's. The purpose was to train teachers in the best literacy methods; content coaching was understood as an authentic way to strengthen teachers' grasp of content since many teacher preparation programs were producing teachers who lacked confidence in their content repertoires, particularly in literacy, math and science. From its inception, the coaching model was designed as teacher-centric support, separate from the supervisory purposes of teacher evaluation and student intervention.

While content coaching was a priority for the district, there was limited funding. During this early period, about a third of the schools purchased part time coaches out of their own budgets. Then in 2007, partially as a companion to the formation of the literacy collaborative with Lesley College, CPS began funding part-time coach positions in schools. As the literacy collaborative unfolded, it became clear that very high capacity teachers were needed to successfully train teachers at their respective schools. A talented literacy teacher was placed in each of the district's 17 schools to devote part of their responsibility to coaching their colleagues. Most of these school coaches split their time between teaching and coaching until 2010, when each school was funded with a full time literacy and math coach.

Around this time, CPS also decided to develop a district tier of coaches to train school based literacy coaching staff. They invested in an in-house training program to save money and build internal capacity, as opposed to enrolling individual coaches in expensive university institutes. Because there was then an identified need to strengthen elementary teachers' grasp of content in math and science, the coaching model expanded into those areas. Both Math and Science coaching programs were also designed completely in-house without a university partner, serving teachers who desired more content preparation and exposure to the best methods in those areas. Other subject disciplines for secondary schools were added more slowly in the years that followed: Social Studies/History and World Language, and they were staffed with a very limited number of secondary level coaches.

CPS was in the vanguard of coaching implementation nationally, but for different reasons than most other urban school districts. CPS instituted coaching as a content support to authentic teaching and learning, while many other districts narrowed their curriculum, adopting coaching as a data-driven partner in response to public pressures from NCLB. Districts across the country defaulted on building instructional capacity as they responded to this new era of accountability. Race to the Top (2009) intensified this pressure by raising stakes and narrowing the curriculum even further. Nationally, curriculum was linked to standards, primarily in language arts and math; full liberal arts curricula were no longer the norm.

At the height of these federal pressures in 2010, CPS district chose to fund two coaches per building and to add coaches in other secondary disciplines. Later in 2013, they again demonstrated their commitment to authentic teaching and learning by asking district coaches and teachers to create a rigorous, multi-discipline curriculum aligned with Common Core standards intended to become the main source of relevant teaching and coaching content. The curriculum, based on the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach, is due to be complete in 2016.

Teachers and coaches alike supported this decision to adopt and validate a new curriculum because they already believed that strong curricular content would close the achievement gap and produce the results they desired, especially when combined with the equity-based school reorganization plan implemented in 2010 by the board and superintendent. [1]

However, the district's early decision not to adopt a system-wide curriculum unintentionally limited the impact of coaching as a pedagogical tool. While it gave teachers valuable experience in originating new content curriculum, it did not offer a systematic framework of teaching and consequently, the linking of student data to lesson design became weak. As a result, teachers have been engaged in creating curriculum

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[1] CPS Innovation Agenda: 2012.

and designing lessons in isolated, classroom-based installments. Additionally, the lack of a uniform curriculum has led to a much more complicated, layered reporting structure, with the addition of district coaches and coordinators as content experts. It is currently four layers deep: school coaches / district coaches / coordinators / central office supervisors. Now in 2014, many teachers, coaches, and principals see the need to streamline the layered implementation of coaching as they simultaneously address content needs with a new, robust curriculum and shift their attention to data driven pedagogy.

The CPS implementation approach has consisted of a particular set of strategies, based on the Lesley College model in Literacy and a content focused collection of designs in Math, Science and other disciplines. The efforts of coaches at different schools has resulted in isolated changes, local improvements and trainings, with very few best practices shared across all schools and even fewer adopted into common practice. In sum, there has been little attention paid to the system's content designs and strategies despite their power to connect and add leverage to this work.[2]

True to its origins, the strength of the CPS coaching model continues to be its focus on rich content and authentic teaching and learning. It has begun the shift from a professional development support to one focused on both professional development and alignment with student needs. For CPS to maximize its coaching investment, it needs to shift to a collaborative systems approach, with purposeful aligned roles for teachers, the coach, the principal and the district. As the common curricular framework emerges, the district will benefit from shifting its coaching model priority from content to pedagogy in a less isolated, more collaborative school frame.

Methods

This is a qualitative ethnographic review structured with interview, observation, artifact analysis and survey protocols structured to reveal insightful patterns about the current state of coaching in CPS and to make suggestions about how to improve it. Recent instruction research is added to strengthen the multiple sources of evidence around key findings.

Unlike other evaluations that are mixed method studies, there is no existing or preassembled data specifically about CPS coaching to draw from. Therefore, an ethnographic method is the appropriate strategy for the initial low inference creation of meaningful data. It is often the case that initial ethnographic data findings and recommendations offer valuable insights that generate a second tier of derived questions. These new questions fall outside the scope of this study since our protocols were not

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[2] Senge, P. (2000). A primer to the five disciplines: Team learning (pp. 73-77). *In Schools that Learn*. New York, NY: Doubleday Publishers.

designed to respond to them. We have found that internal data gathering is often a useful response to an ethnographic review, and that emergent questions can be embedded in an ongoing set of benchmarks to guide future work. In our framework of coaching benchmarks, we will suggest a few such categories for collectible data for 2014-15. If activated, this new data could further inform the implementation that will take place during the 2015-16 school year.

In consultation with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, we decided to interview 5 central office leadership team members, 6 district coordinators, 6 district coaches and 16 principals, and their respective ELA (18) and Math (17) school coaches. In addition, we conducted the following observations in each school (see Figure 0):

- One ELA and one Math school coach actively coaching a teacher
- One observation of one Common Planning Time (CPT) team activity at each school
- One ILT or PLC meeting

   We surveyed a sample of 180 teachers who actively participate in coaching at their respective schools. We asked about their level of satisfaction and priorities with coaching services in their school. All this data was analyzed for patterns and reinforcing themes, as well as evidence-based quotes Since CRLS had already embarked on an approved restructuring pilot of their high school coaching program, the district opted not to focus our data collection there at this time.

Data Source	Completed	Existing Coach Staff	Notes
Interviews	**70**		
Central Administration	5	5	Relevant roles to coaching implementation
Principals	17	17	All participated
School Coaches	32	33	Math and ELA only; One coach on leave
District Coaches	7	9.2	Content coaches only; one on leave
Coordinators	6	11	Interviewed content coordinators only
CLRS	0	7	Pilot site not included; positions cut in 2014 budget
Observations	**50**		
Teachers with School Coaches	33	35	Math and ELA only; One coach on leave
PLC/ILT Meetings	17	17	One meeting per school
Teacher Survey	**180**		
Teachers	180	500	Only those participating currently in coach activities

Figure 0: Data Sources/Existing Coach Staff

Driving Questions

The current student performance data is one motivating force for this study, as exhibited in Figures 1 and 2. For both ELA and Math MCAS in 2009 – 2013, we see a plateau of slow annual gains in the percentage of Cambridge Public Schools students scoring proficient and advanced. In year 2009 – 2011,

ELA gains are quite dramatic, with a 5% gain in total CPS students scoring proficient or advanced. However, total gains from 2011 – 2013 is only 3 additional percentage points. The gap between CPS ELA percent proficient and advanced and the same metric for the state nearly closes over this time period, but CPS has yet to match the state average percent proficient or advanced.

For both ELA and Math MCAS in 2009 – 2013, we see a plateau of slow annual gains in the percentage of Cambridge Public Schools students scoring proficient and advanced. Similar to the pattern in ELA, Math scores plateau after 2010. While percent proficient and advanced in CPS finally surpasses the state average in 2013, the gain is not dramatic. This pattern sets the stage to deeply examine the district-wide instructional practices and supports, with an eye toward the instructional coaching model.
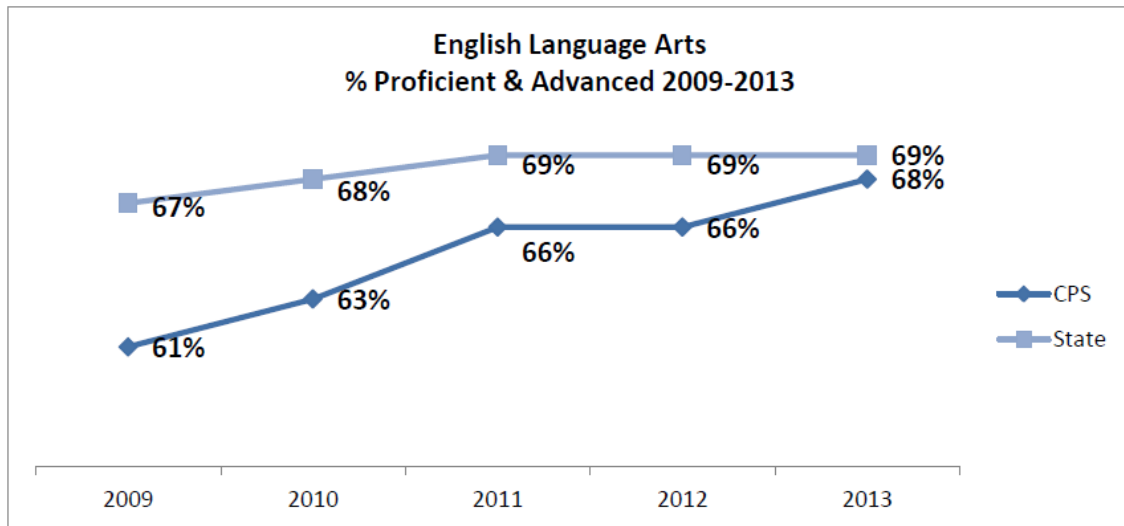
Figure 1: 2013 MCAS LA Achievement Profile
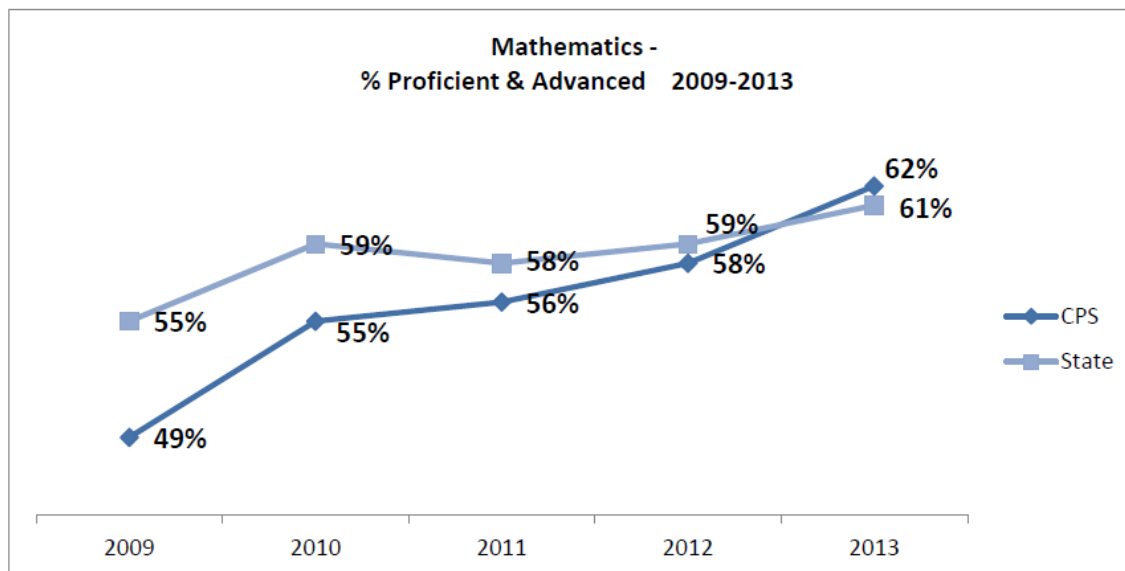
Figure 2: 2013 MCAS Math Achievement Profile

As we examined the MCAS sub-scores, it is clear that the district is enrolling more students who need multiple supports. Data-driven differentiated teaching and learning is the remedy to address this pattern. Hence, it is not enough to recommend a simple pedagogic shift in coaching to deliver differentiated teaching and learning; we must seek out interactional insights about how to best ensure the success of pedagogic coaching particularly for the lower third of students.

With the student achievement informing the purpose of this study, we begin our inquiry by identifying the three overarching questions in the proposal:

1. *As currently designed and implemented, and in light of what research has demonstrated matters to its outcomes, what are the strengths of the CPS's coaching model?*

2. *What areas of the coaching model demonstrate need for improvement? How can we strengthen its delivery to students and teachers?*

3. *How does the current CPS coaching model build instructional capacity and agency?*

The purpose of the inquiry, however, is not only to provide the CPS with baseline data that can answer these three questions but also to suggest recommendations for program modifications and improvements at the school level that will result in improved instructional quality and increased student learning. Therefore, the proposed review also asks us to address these three additional questions:

1. *Considering the findings from the baseline data, what school and district level strategies might the CPS implement to increase the impact of its instructional coaching model on teaching and learning?*

2. *To what extent and in what ways would these strategies require changes in the actual CPS coaching model?*

3. *To what extent and in what ways would these strategies lead to more direct approaches to assessing the outcomes of coaching on the achievement of the district's teaching and learning goals?*

Finally, we collected data about ways that the district has organized itself centrally to support schools in maximizing coaching. For this effort, we will focus on the district role as the builder of the framework for the CPS coach program (including staffing, funding, scheduling, training, and convening) and make recommendations about how to shift it to a powerful reinforcing system across schools.

Informed Design

Our firm brings a collective experience of ten years implementing and evaluating coaching; in the last two years we began to focus in on what specific conditions and coaching practices need to be in place to ensure system-wide efficacy. Our goal as a review partner is to assist CPS to transform coaching from their current implementation approach towards a more coherent, productive model.

We make a key distinction at the outset of this review, noting Stephen Anderson's[3] insightful contrast between coaching as an implementation of specific, technical instructional interventions and coaching as part of a larger coherent instructional system. Anderson raises concerns about the ability of the intervention approach to improve the quality of instruction, and argues that system-wide change is attained through a holistic model, aligning district and school goals through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that inherently supporting collegial learning and development.

Jal Mehta poses similar cautions about technical interventions, concluding that, "Best practice reform rarely, if ever, delivers examples of successfully transforming a mediocre school system into a high preforming one. If we are to deliver transformational improvement, it is not enough to wedge new practices into familiar schools and districts—we must reimagine the system itself."[4]

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[3] Anderson, S. (2014). The Enduring Challenge of Achieving Effective Teaching on a Large Scale. In H. J. Malone (Ed.) *Leading Educational Change: Global Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

[4] Mehta, J., Schwartz, R. & Hess, F. (2012). *The Futures of School Reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

We believe that reimaging the system includes creating conditions that are likely to breed success: defining a common understanding of good instruction across schools; aligning teacher, coach and administrator roles to support and guide that instruction and designing spaces in schools and across schools to share instructional knowledge in practice. These research insights seem particularly relevant to the CPS coach implementation; this holistic frame will guide our recommendations.

Current Practice State: What Exists?

The district currently spends upwards of $3.5 million dollars on full time school and district-based coaching in Literacy and Mathematics, and district based coaching in Science, Social Studies and Foreign Languages. There are eight Curriculum Coordinators to whom the district coaches report; the coordinators also share the evaluation of the school-based coaches with the principal of each elementary and upper school. They provide content expertise, observation and documentation, often alternating with the principal over the three years of the evaluation cycle.

In total, for the 2013-2014 school year, there are 18 ELA coaches, 17 Mathematics coaches, 4 Science coaches, and 1 Social Studies coach currently in the JK-12 grade span. Of these, the 3 science coaches, 2 Math coaches, 1 ELA coach and 1 Social Studies are from Cambridge, Rindge and Latin School (CRLS). In lieu of coaching, CRLS is implementing a pilot program to facilitate teacher learning afterschool next school year. For more information about the pilot at the high school, please see Appendix A.

The roles and responsibilities of coaches vary across schools, and in many cases depend on how individual principals decide to deploy this resource. In the four Upper Schools, on average roughly 25% of their time is spent actually coaching teachers one-on-one. Approximately 40% of their time is spent teaching intervention classes to students, with another 25% is expended on Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), district and cluster meetings. The remaining 10% is devoted to staff professional development and extra activities like math club or math parent training.

The ratio of school coach to general education teachers varies from approximately 1:20 at the smallest elementary school to 1:40 at the high school, thus limiting the average teacher contact to 2-4 coach visits per year dependent on the ratio. Since the decisions about who to coach and how often are quite different across these schools and dependent on school schedules, the instructional benefits to teachers can be uneven. Elementary schools tend to be more inconsistently programmed: only 2 of the 11 elementary

schools have Expanded Learning Time, and others use strategies like platooning[5] or additional music and art specialists to secure a schedule of between 1-2 common planning time sessions per week.

School coaches also meet regularly with curriculum coordinators and district coaches and are responsible for a variety of duties delegated to them from the district level. They have a shared evaluation process with the district coordinator and the principal. Interviews revealed that coaches are not evaluated directly on the student achievement gains related to school goals or their own goals, yet schools are held accountable to progress and performance metrics as required by the state.

Throughout the decade of district sponsored coaching that has existed in CPS, it has expanded at key junctures by adding both constructive and competing performance expectations between the school and district levels. When systems are not coherent, a series of unintentional consequences emerge. For example, school based and district professional development options were not designed to compete, but they are currently competing for time and effort amongst coaches. This additive approach has created the historically "layered" implementation we find today, since there are very few instances of program deletions accompanying the stream of program additions.

The CPS coaching program has tried to serve at least three main goals simultaneously: to deliver authentic teaching and learning in the content areas; accommodate explicit accountability mandates from the state and the federal governments; and address local school and district improvement goals on an annual basis. A more systemic approach connecting school goals and district goals with resources is called for at this juncture.

Leaders of the CPS coaching program did try to steer a course over time that honored equity, based on the assumption that all schools should be treated equally in regard to distribution of staff and services. One of the primary motives of the 2010 reorganization of grades and school feeder patterns was to create equity of access for all CPS students. But school leaders quickly realized that despite improved equity enrollment structures, all schools still have different needs, as do the teachers within those schools. As one principal's staff concluded after evaluating their school coach program, "One size does not fit all here." Teachers value training in differentiation above all else, as expressed in out teacher survey. Recent research calls for a more developmental approach towards differentiated resources for varied school profiles, and a gradual release from central control that is earned through achieving mutually desired outcomes. Gradual release is a strategy recently documented in the global literature of school improvement.[6]

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[5] Platooning: Departmentalized delivery: double classes of students move to the content teacher, releasing other teachers for coaching activities.

[6] Mourshed, M. Chijioke, C., & Barber, M. (2010). *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*. London: McKinsey & Co.

Finally, the purposes and desired outcomes of the CPS instructional coaching now need to be studied in the emerging accountability and school readiness context; research suggests that accountability requirements need to be balanced by strategic instructional capacity building at the schools if they are to create a system that creates desired results for CPS teachers and students.[7] Compelling research has also reinforced the central importance of teacher quality for all students and a differentiated set of teaching methods for different needs of students.[8] Yet state and federal policy and assessment directives have not prioritized funding for pedagogic training for Common Core teachers. CPS plans to augment this gap through the creation of a robust curriculum, and a revised coaching design. CPS is actively asking, "What is the ideal balance between these initiatives and what is the best way to prepare CPS coaches and teachers for the next phase of reform?"

Current Research State: What Matters?

What do we know about coaching as an instructional improvement strategy? What matters with respect to structures, use of time, practices, consistency, and effectiveness of the model as they relate to instructional coaching research and its impact on teaching? What conditions make an achievement difference in a school that is implementing coaching?

Instructional coaching as a strategy for improving student achievement is based on the premise that improved teaching practice is a major route to improving student learning and, thereby, measured student achievement. We have learned from research on authentic student learning about the importance of ensuring that students develop "the capacity to use what they are learning in traditional and novel ways, the capacity to make connections between new knowledge and old."[9]

To accomplish learning of this sort, schools must provide students with opportunities to solve problems and come to understand academic content in more complex ways."[10] Teaching that enables students to develop these capacities has been called teaching for understanding. It has been a fundamental part of the initial standards-based reform efforts; it is a central part of the Common Core. CPSD has recently initiated a revision of curriculum based on Understanding by Design and Common Core principles. It will be replacing an informal curriculum that is not always explicitly aligned with Common Core, and that is lacking in ways to

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[7] Elmore, R. (2006). *The problem of capacity in the (re) design of educational accountability systems*. Conference paper. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

[8] Peske, H., & Haycock, K. (2006). *Teaching inequality. Washington, DC: The Education Trust*.

[9] H. J. Malone (Ed.) *Leading Educational Change: Global Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

[10] Neufeld, B. & Donaldson, M. (2010). Coaching for Instructional Improvement: Conditions and Strategies that Matter. (Education Matters, Boston, MA.)

build student capacity and mastery for higher-level thinking and applications. CPS never formally adopted the old curriculum but they have already signaled that they will be adopting the new one. Hopefully, it will alleviate the pressure for teachers and coaches to constantly develop appropriate content as part of their lesson design process.

Traditional research informs the current CPS school-based professional development effort. In order for teachers to teach for understanding in the new curriculum, many need to participate in professional development that will offer them new ideas about learning and a new set of strategies for teaching. This has been true for the last 20 years; it is true today as teachers try to meet the learning needs of a wide range of students and in the current context of the Common Core.

For the last 20 years, CPS has consistently made efforts to improve the quality of teacher professional development. CPS chose to support school-based professional development over the past ten years, long before most other districts embraced it as a reform strategy. It has only been in the past few years that a combination of school and district based professional development options have emerged, partially in response to the shared locus of supervisory control of coaches and the creation of a layer of district coaches and coordinators. What has been known for a long time about the essential features of teacher professional development now suggests a delivery approach grounded in the actions of teachers and supported by the district in new and different ways:[11]

- It must be grounded in inquiry; reflection, experimentation and that are participant driven.

- It must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than on individual teachers.

- It must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.

- It must be connected to and derived and derived from teachers' work with their students.

- It must engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development.

- It must be connected to other aspects of school change to form a systemic support structure at the school and district level.

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[11] Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Milbrey W. McLaughlin. "Policies that support professional development in an era of reform." *Phi Delta Kappan* 76.8 (1995): 597-604.

It was the desire to reorganize professional development along these lines in the late nineties that led to an interest in coaching as a critical component of professional development for teacher growth. Most coaching implementations over the last ten years have implemented some but not all of these criteria; CPS's commitment to authentic teaching and learning places them positively in tis effort.

The research available suggests that embedded professional development that is closely and explicitly tied to teachers' ongoing daily goals is a critical component of enabling teachers to learn to teach students for the kinds of deep understanding required today.[12] When coupled with a firm district goal that calls for all students to progress minimally a full year's growth each school year with simultaneous acceleration gains for those who are striving to close their personal learning gaps, then embedded coaching tends to look like collaborative, team inquiry work that is based on granular student data, common student priorities and differentiated lessons aiming to achieve student mastery for all. One elementary principal reinforced this concept: "The district goal is really for high achievement for all students. It's high expectations for all students and for all teachers around content and knowing how to teach the content with high impact instruction."

We are describing coaching, as it would be implemented in a school context. However, schools are embedded in school districts and there are multiple district factors as well as school-based factors that can support or thwart the potential of instructional coaching. We call this rich array of positive and negative conditions the context for the work. We have learned from district-based research that the district needs to proactively shape the coach's role, focus the coaches' work around the district's instructional goals and articulate the connection between that work and the school's overall reform strategy. [13]

Finally, in New York, Philadelphia, San Diego and Boston an inquiry based team-coaching model has evolved over the past few years that is now producing positive student outcomes through preliminary studies. It is data based and differentiated in its classroom delivery and focused on mastery outcomes for students.[14] True to Anderson's research that prefers systems to siloes, the most successful implementations have developed using the whole school-based PLC as its operating structure.[15]

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[12] Croft, Andrew, et al. "Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well. Issue Brief." *National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality* (2010).

[13] Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2003). Coaching: A strategy for developing instructional capacity—Promises and practicalities. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute Program on Education and Providence, R.I. Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

[14] Boudett, Kathryn Parker, Elizabeth City, and Richard Murnane. (2013 Revised edition). *Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Harvard Education Press. Cambridge, MA 02138, 2005.

[15] Vescio, V., Ross, D. and Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 24 pp.80-91.

SCHOOL BASELINE DATA

This study posits a number of practical questions that may make a difference in the strength of implementation in CPS both as a system of individual schools and a school system simultaneously. The baseline data is derived from a combination of research and our field data protocols. Throughout these two sections on school and district level baseline data, we will address the overarching questions of the study, designed to highlight strengths and delivery improvements.

Baseline Data: Strengths of the Current Program

As currently designed and implemented, and in light of what research has demonstrated "matters" to its outcomes, what are the strengths of the CPS's coaching model?

- Determine evidenced strengths around the coaching model in the Cambridge Public Schools related to content areas, uses of time, practices, and capacity.

The following coach program strengths emerged from central and school interviews:

District Foresight and Persistence

CPS had the foresight to support and invest in coaching long before the reform movement discovered it as a primary lever towards improving teaching and learning. CPS invested in it as a way to further authentic, content-driven teaching and learning. Professionally, CPS staff members have gained significant collective knowledge about what works in classrooms and are proactively poised to reframe their implementation to meet current learning needs.

Districts focused on improvement recognize their imperfections. By virtue of issuing this RFP, CPS has already intuited that some changes in the implementation of coaching are now in order to assure the closing of its persistent achievement gap. They are seeking to understand how coaching can be best positioned in their district to leverage improved student learning results, a laudable, practical goal.

Early District Staffing Support

In its early stages, the district office positioned itself as a pro-active funder of coach positions distributed in individual schools and a supporter of school-based coach training. District coaches were hired to save money by training school coaches in-house as opposed to sending them out one by one to expensive external institutes. Coordinators were present to lead curricular adoptions and central training meetings. In lieu of adopting a content-based curriculum, the district supported content focused coaches. From the beginning, the district saw coaching as a priority and invested significantly in it.

Valuable Resources

Although the coaching system has undergone significant adjustments and adaptations to external demands, it still has valuable staff resources and design products that can be reprioritized and redeployed to address current and future demands. In the beginning phases, principals found time in the schedule for CPT teams and one-on-one coaching with individual teachers. Principals prioritized coaching over competing school and district initiatives.

School-based Ownership

Coaching was originally conceived at a time when the district internally controlled most of the decisions about curriculum and instruction (as opposed to external mandates), and they opted over ten years ago to give principals and teachers shared discretionary leadership in implementing them. School ownership is high and district resources support staffing and training options. This culture of shared site-based ownership continues today and is universally cited in research as an essential coaching condition, when combined with strong instructional leadership of the principal and alignment with school and district growth goals.[16]

Content Focused Coaching

The original purpose of CPS coaching was to strengthen teacher grasp of content, first with literacy, followed by math and science and eventually social studies and foreign language. It was justified by

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[16] A-309 Fall, 2013. Knowledge Synthesis of Instructional Coaching Presentations.

an inadequate focus on content in teacher preparation programs nationally, and many elementary teachers acknowledging "holes" in their content knowledge base in one or more of the six subject area disciplines they were expected to teach.

Over the past 10 years, CPS teachers focused on authentic teaching and learning bolstered by strong content knowledge; this belief was central to the early implementations. They had the advantage of deepening their content knowledge through a daily culture of coach and colleague support. This professionalized approach developed into a primary source of teaching content.[17]

In many ways this early, deep experience with challenging content has made teachers and students more ready to absorb Common Core rigor and the Understanding by Design (UbD) curriculum. As one central office leader remarked, authentic coaching is the foundation to a strong curriculum and Common Core: "And Common Core is not the be all and end all. That is in front of us and we need to be ready, but I think more important than the Common Core is [what we have always prioritized] helping children be able to think critically, to be independent learners, to be independent in general, to be excited about their learning."

Early Coaching Formats

Originally, early coach formats supported more one-on-one teacher-coach interactions than they do now. The original one-on-ones took the form of pre-planning lessons, debriefing lessons, and modeling of instructional strategies. Some teachers and principals have built from this past intensive experience; in these cases, it serves as a potential pedagogical foundation for all students. Labor-intensive, content-driven, one-on-one coach protocols are a strength that can be tapped to now focus on pedagogy.

Non-Supervisory

District leaders and school principals encouraged teacher coaching separate from supervision from the beginning. This original culture supports authentic teacher leadership and a non-supervisory, trust-based coaching culture. In schools where this has been adhered to, trust between teachers, coaches and principals is more secure, and teachers tend to take more creative risks that often pay off by increasing student learning.

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[17] West, L. & Cameron, A. (2013). *Agents of Change: How Content Coaching Transforms Teaching and Learning,* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishers).

Instructional Capacity

Coach positions have built some powerful teacher capacity over the past ten years, i.e., content knowledge, instructional beliefs, structures, expectations, and professional training that guide the development of coaching to its next phase. This can serve as a foundation for a systemic implementation if it is more purposefully focused on meeting the needs of struggling students.

Principals and coaches see coaching as a lever to strengthen instructional capacity. At least a third of the principals interviewed defined coaches as instrumental in raising expectations for teachers in the building, and over half of our classroom observations produced evidence of coaches urging teacher improvements, most commonly in lesson pacing, differentiated groups and higher level questions. In these cases, coaching became a lever for building instructional capacity, customized to the students in the room

Baseline Data: School Delivery Problems and Implications

What areas of the current school-coaching model demonstrate need for improvement? How can we strengthen its delivery to students and teachers?

This section is meant to identify key school delivery problems from our observations, interviews and survey. We will examine the implications of the findings and couple them with program improvement strategies. The unique conditions of learning fostered in this district over time originally created a supportive organizational context for the work, but it is no longer maximizing its practical results with students. Hence, most of the improvement strategies are practical adjustments to the culture and they establish a systemic framework of shared expectations for all staff.

- Determine evidenced areas in need of improvement around the coaching model in the Cambridge Public Schools related to content areas, uses of time, practices, and capacity.

School Coach Role Findings

School Coach Job Descriptions

Currently, there are three different school coach job descriptions as found in Appendix B: one for math K-12 and two for literacy JK-5 and 6-12. Our comparison between the actual job description and our observations of coaches in action led us to conclude that the written versions were idealized and not routinely implemented with fidelity. As expressed by one coach, "What I do and what the job description

says is quite different, and so I question whether I'm doing the job that I am supposed to be doing. I feel like I am working hard and running as fast as I can, but I don't know that I am making any difference." The math building coach description calls for significantly more responsibilities than the literacy job description and would be nearly impossible to deliver on a daily basis.

In addition, when we asked principals and coaches about their knowledge of the school coach job description approximately one third said they were not aware of it. When we checked with Human Resources and the Coordinators, they promptly produced different versions of job descriptions and cited times in interviews or coach meetings when they are "distributed" but not discussed. Most new coaches and principals stated that they had not been oriented to the district job expectations for school coaches or offered role-specific training.

Two coach theories of action are now in play: teacher development vs. student results. The school job descriptions focus primarily on teacher development and make tacit assumptions about how developing teachers might impact student learning. In contrast, the teacher survey revealed that improving student achievement and engaging in collaborative practices are identified as the top purpose of coaching by nearly 60% of respondents. These answers are also the top choices for the second purpose of coaching. There is a more even distribution for the third choice, with improving lesson design at the highest frequency. These survey priorities are consistent with our field findings and are aligned with the best research available, i.e., a focus on student results with data driven and collaborative team formats are the most effective ways of impacting outcomes.[18]

The link between highly impactful coach delivery and improved student achievement needs to be made more explicit with a clear focus on data. Data driven teacher teams producing common priority lessons[19] and one on ones fed back to the team by its members are the most promising strategies for the reasons previously cited. A sample school coach draft job description reflecting the recommendations of this report can be found in Appendix B.

Coach Time

61% of teacher survey respondents believe that their instruction would be improved by increased time with their coach. However, the enacted role of school coaches is very inconsistent across schools in regards to how they spend their time and which activities take priority in their schedule. There are many reasons for this situation. While some of these differences are justified because of the differing needs of

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[18] Gallimore, R. & Ermeling, B. (2010). Five Keys to Effective Teacher Learning Teams. *Education Week,* Volume 29, Issue 29.

[19] Jacobson, D. (2010). Coherent instructional improvement and PLCs: Is it possible to do both? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91 (6), pp. 38-45.

each school's student population, the enacted coach role at present lacks parameters to guide its focus on common coaching needs and customized local needs. Consequently, it fails to protect coaches from taking on the "unmet needs" of other worthy district and school initiatives.

At the school level, coaches can be asked by their principals to lead a variety of time expending efforts: grade level teams, one-on-ones, school professional development offerings, organization of walk-throughs and peer coaching activities, school improvement goal writing, the PLC/ILT meetings and intensive coaching of new/struggling teachers. School coaches have recently been asked by the district to lead daily interventionist teaching of struggling students and extensive curriculum unit design work.

School coach time is also tapped centrally. The coach position has become a convenient school portal for central initiatives to implement their priorities, while the school goals of coaching for maximizing student learning have shifted away from their original intent. Currently there is little coordination between school and district time assignments for school coaches; it is left up to the coach to try to meet these dual demands. One coach explained, "There are times when I don't have a sense of priority over competing commitments between district meetings and my school coaching schedule. And I don't really have anyone I can ask who is ultimately in charge since my principal wants me to stay at the school and district coach wants me in the central meetings."

As more initiatives and expectations added, the more the potentially high impact coaching time on teams or one-on-one have diminished. The bottom line is that coach time is now inadequate to access all teachers in a building more than a few times per year, and without more access, there can be little learning impact. One teacher summarized it, "We need more coaches who have more time, and more afterschool hour availability, more thoughtfully planned coach led PD in the school, less central PD."

Coach Time Not Focused on High Impact Actions

Strong supporting evidence for more coach time on "high impact" actions emerged primarily from principal interviews, our observations of teachers and coaches in action and school coach schedules. *High impact coaching in this study refers to two dimensions of teacher actions: those that result in positive or accelerated student learning and those that give more teachers access to coach expertise in a limited time frame.*

Our observations and interviews revealed that current coach time is not highly focused on either of these dimensions with less than 50% of most coach time spent on grade level meetings and one on one coaching sessions combined. Rather, it is focused on ancillary, low leverage tasks that are randomly assigned and scheduled. A coach at an elementary school gauged her time, "I actually did keep a log for

awhile and I found about 25% of my time was spent in meetings with the principal which I find way too much. A lot of my time was taken up with organizing and collecting data. I would say less than half my time was spent directly with teachers and very little of my time was spent as an instructional support or coaching within the classroom."

From our observations of teachers and coaches in action, we learned that one on ones are typically expanded across numerous periods including: pre-planning for the session, co-planning, co-teaching/observing, debriefing. One strong one on one can take an average of three periods, with only one teacher benefiting. When combined with the disparate reasons coaches identified for selecting teachers within their school for coaching sessions, the net effect is that most teachers in a school participate in very few coaching sessions that make a difference.

Our examination of the school coach schedules revealed that priorities for coaches across schools differ widely, but the overarching pattern is one of coaches who subscribe to planning and delivering between 12-16 sessions of school PD, facilitating ILT/PLCs, conducting one on ones and rotational team meetings and attending district meetings and trainings. While a few elementary principals have managed one common planning time period per grade per week, the majority of principals have not been able to juggle their competing program priorities and they have invested in some form of cyclical rotation for common planning time meetings. In some elementary schools, a cycle schedule is established which results in a loss of two-thirds of the coaching time in an ideal schedule. Most elementary schools schedule three cycles per year. A sample elementary cycle plan is exhibited below.

Our school has our year divided into 3 coaching cycles and meet once a week with each team to do work focused around the SIP also.

Cycle 1: Oct-Dec I worked with grades 4 and 5

5th g. Team meeting: 1x/week, Mondays from 1:40-2:30
4th g. Team meeting: 1x/week, Wednesdays from 11:25-12:10

Cycle 2: Jan-March I am working with grades 1 and 2

1st g. Team meeting: 1x/week, Wednesdays from 12:10-1:00
2nd g. Team meeting: 1x/week, Wednesdays from 10:45-11:30

Cycle 3: March-June I will be worked with grades K and 3

JK/K Team meeting: 1x/week, Mondays (not sure of time yet)
3rd g. Team meeting: 1x/week, Fridays from 8:25-9:10

Figure 3: Sample Elementary Coaching Cycle

Some elementary schools are more granular than others in their approach to data and cycles, and these schools tend to be more successful in achieving gains. These cycles currently range from one grade level team meeting every 7-8 days to one every 2-7 weeks. A few elementary schools meet with only a few grade level teams each semester through a rotational schedule implemented over the course of a school year.

Upper School principals have more time options that they can exercise, but they tend to organize teams by content rather than pedagogy and on a trimester basis, thereby limiting the access of any one teacher. At the upper schools, coaching sessions between teachers and coaches often occur only during a single trimester, time limited by scheduling priorities. One upper school principal acknowledged how inadequate this time allotment is, stating: "One trimester a year for common planning time is not enough."

Principals do have discretion about how to schedule the coach's time, a factor directly related to a coach's ability to succeed in their role. Principals do have control over supervisory or administrative assignments, however, they do not have control over many of the conditions that control coach time, such as length of the school day, flex time, district stipend projects for coaches or mandated coach participation in district initiatives, such as interventionist teaching. One frustrated elementary principal captured the tension between principals' desires to assign coaches to high impact duties and limited control over their schedule and obligations, saying: "We need clarity about what their roles are and who supervises and evaluates them and how we can build our communication at the district level between the principals and the coaches."

Current coach schedules often respond to needs identified by other district initiatives, i.e., coaches take on unmet instructional needs of special needs and ELL students. All middle school coaches are spending approximately half their time in daily, direct teaching of students in need of intervention. Also, central trainings and required meetings result in a significant reduction of coach time. Coaches have put in hundreds of hours writing curriculum over the past two years, sometimes after school, but sometimes during their designated coach time.

Coaches are also sometimes asked by principals to intervene in a quasi-supervisory mode by focusing on teachers in need of performance improvement. These are usually difficult, time consuming cases. Despite the district's commitment to keep the role of coaches non-supervisory, there is a natural inclination for coaches to help teachers who are trying to learn new methods, especially if they want to grow their teaching repertoire. The role of principals in that process is pivotal; many expressed that they work purposefully to maintain separate supervisory relationships and many felt maintaining this

trust is central to the success of coaching in their building. One principal struck this less-than-transparent agreement with the coach: "I have a rule where coaches won't tell me what they see in classrooms, but I can tell coaches what I see in order to address specific issues."

Finally, some principals ask coaches to take on administrative support duties, thereby eroding their time for high impact coaching. As a result, a few coaches define a supportive principal as one whom, "Limits coach administrative tasks." Consequently only a small percentage of each coach's time is actually spent on coaching a teacher or group of teachers on improved teaching methods such as differentiation or student mastery and these are very high impact strategies towards improved student achievement.

Over-emphasis on Content vs. Pedagogic Coaching

Historically, in the absence of an adopted content curriculum, CPS' early coaching priorities defaulted of necessity to a content focused coaching model. The lack of strong validated curriculum may have unintentionally reinforced the need for content coaches who constantly support CPS teachers in the production of relevant content lessons.

Strong supporting evidence for a shift to a pedagogic coach role emerged from interviews of principals, coordinators and coaches. After participating in a CPT meeting where Math and ELA are dealt with separately, an elementary school principal stated: "We need more collaborations and common understandings especially between ELA and Math approaches—more consistency through pedagogy." An experienced elementary principal underscored that pedagogy supersedes content: "I love the idea of instructional coaches. I'm not necessarily wed to an ELA coach or a Math coach, because I think best practices are best practices and it's not so much about the content. It's about really helping with teacher moves and instruction. It's an added benefit that you're focused on mathematics or science or whatever you're a coach of, but for me it's not really about the content. It's about the conversation around good teaching."

As these comments reveal, during the past 5-6 years, the original "content purpose" of coaching has been shifting to strengthening teacher pedagogy. Teachers are facing more diverse classrooms with varying profiles of student need. Content has become more available online and through texts, colleague exchanges and district curricula, while how to teach in a customized, differentiated way continues to be a skill highly sought out by teachers everywhere. As Common Core unfolded, teachers became aware of new curricular models and examples. The CPS district has prioritized the Understanding by Design curriculum to be fully adopted by 2016. Now as the framework and UbD units are emerging, written by

and for CPS teachers, the district needs to shift the priorities to the more high leverage pursuit of improving the delivery and teaching of lessons

Given these significant contextual changes in the instructional culture of CPS, pedagogic coaching is now surfacing naturally, along with a desire to share some common teaching levers. In one upper school, they prioritized writing across the curriculum since it was a common interest of all teachers. This Upper School Principal stated, "When we offer professional development [in specific content areas] only some content teachers respond—we need a pedagogical way to cut across the entire school and make it relevant to everyone."

Team Approach to Pedagogy

There is an emerging consensus amongst principals and coaches who favor a team approach to pedagogy. One principal expressed the reasoning behind this consensus: "When how we teach is the focus rather than what we teach, grade level teams can impact the teaching of every student and teacher in the school every week." Others noted that two CPT's per week per teacher is the ideal way to implement this strategy, but they would be pleased to start with one period per week. Grade level team meetings can also be a structure to instigate one-on-one sessions that model effective teaching methods across content for the whole team.

In addition, there is compelling research[20] about the value of teacher teams that focus on common pedagogical priorities within professional learning communities. Teachers on teams examine student data and set priority learning goals focused on priorities shared across a grade level or content area. Rather than teach and assess an idiosyncratic set of learning goals by each teacher of each class, teachers all teach the common priorities that relate to all of their classrooms. (See Figures 4 and 5 the contrasting before and after concept of common priorities). Once the common learning priorities have been addressed through the strength of collaborative lesson design, the teaching takes place and the team feeds back how it went. Then, the individual teachers address the remaining outlier learning priorities.

The two most common approaches for developing teacher teams within a school's PLC are the inquiry-oriented and the results-oriented approaches. Both fail to adequately address the overall coherence of a school's efforts to improve teaching and learning. Researchers have recently identified three types of coherence critical to realizing the full potential of professional learning communities: alignment across teams, the coherence of each team's annual work, and the integration of professional development and the

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[20] Jacobson, D. (2010). Coherent instructional improvement and PLCs: Is it possible to do both? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91 (6), pp. 38-45.

professional learning community. The common priorities approach is a synthesis of the inquiry-oriented and results-oriented PLC approaches. It incorporates Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) backward planning emphasis on coherence into the work of collaborative teams. The approach supports school leaders in balancing twin instructional improvement objectives: developing innovative, effective teacher teams and developing a coherent, school wide approach to improving teaching and learning. Collaborative lesson-design projects encourage teachers to set more ambitious learning goals and to develop engaging lessons with the appropriate level of student challenge so that all students can reach the goals.

BEFORE

Teacher B

Teacher C

Teacher A

Standards

AFTER

Common Assessments

Every teacher includes Priority Learning Goals

Priority Learning Goals
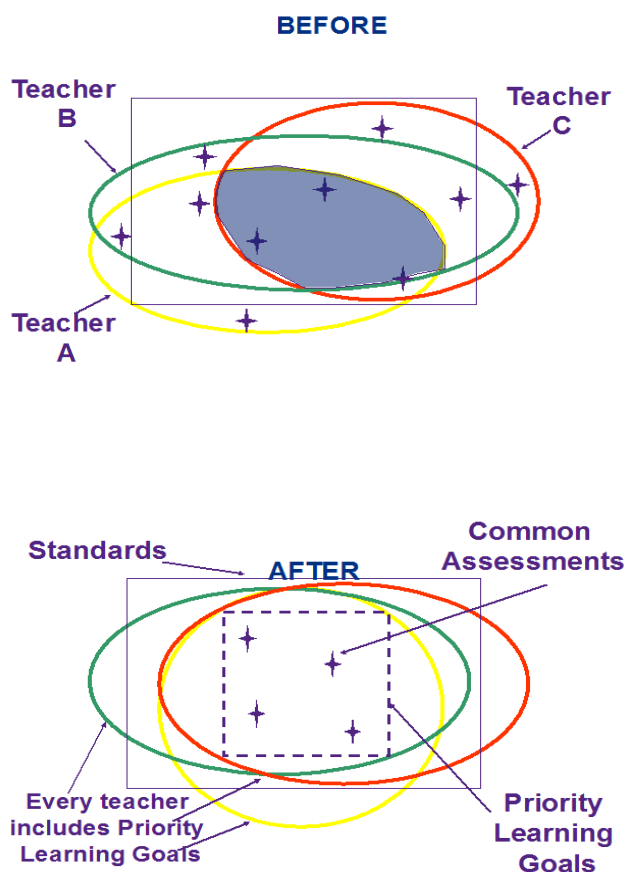
Figures 4 and 5: Common Learning Priorities, Before/After Teaming Advantage

BEFORE: Three teachers on a grade level identify idiosyncratic learning goals by working alone without team collaboration

AFTER: Once common learning goals are identified, every teacher teachers them using a collaborative, time saving lesson design.

An emphasis on pedagogy doesn't diminish the importance of content, but it does clarify pedagogical actions. One Math coach agreed that pedagogy should be the top priority, "I've been here a long time now and there are some ways in which I feel like [content] coaching is becoming less effective, because many people have already started to internalize and externalize the content that we have been working on for the last three years. They need less of that from me and more about how to teach."

A coordinator further qualified the primary role of pedagogy: "It depends on context—some situations have a rich menu of curriculum units to draw from, so the highest leverage is about how well it is taught for the audience at hand. Other situations have a sparse source for curriculum lessons and units and it is more justified to spend time on both aspects of delivery: content and pedagogy."

School Coach Role Recommendations

1. *Focus coach time on high impact actions through a job description*

2. *Prioritize pedagogic coaching and common planning teams*

3. *Develop shared vision of common duties for the school coaching role*

4. *Expand time opportunities for team schedules*

   Explanation:

Tight/Loose Coach Job Description: Construct a tight/loose agreement with principals on the duties of coaches, i.e., tight common duties for all and looser customized duties related to each school's needs based on student performance trends.[21] Administrative tasks, quasi-supervision cases, and the work of other district initiatives should be eliminated from the coach role as the focus on pedagogy and delivering student outcomes becomes primary.

Pedagogy vs. Content Focus: Fund a single pedagogical coach in each Elementary School and Upper School. All coaches should be asked to resign their current positions and be notified of their eligibility to apply for the newly posted pedagogic coach position. Offer training on setting common team priorities.

Shared Vision: A shared vision of the coach role is needed to create a coach system in which schools and the district positively reinforce each other's actions. A clear, system-wide agreement about coach responsibilities, reporting and communication is needed; ideally it should respond to the results-driven strategies identified in this report.

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[21] Platooning Definition: Every grade has specific common planning time meetings every week; specialists added to create a free period with coach.

School Day and Team Priorities: Explore principal priorities and successful practices for scheduling team meetings at the elementary schools. At the four Upper Schools, prioritize a continuous schedule of team cycle meetings rather than limiting them to one trimester per year.

Teacher Access Findings

Overemphasis on one on one vs. team coaching

The concept of teacher access gauges how much time per teacher is possibly spent with a coach either in a team format or one-on-one, since these are the primary coaching strategies that produce positive results.[22] Once the common planning time scheduling is prioritized, there are two additional dimensions that define the concept of coach access: amount of coach time available for each teacher annually and amount of coach preparation time for each teacher contact.

Although both team and one-on-one coaching are potentially high impact, team coaching is dramatically more effective in reaching many more teachers per week. The labor- intensive one-on-one format calls for pre and post conferences and either classroom modeling or co-teaching by the coach as well as a debrief session afterwards. For the planning stage, some coaches e-mail talking points for the lesson to the teacher the night before, a very detailed preparation. In comparison, team access is a more lateral, efficient format in reaching a much higher ratio of teachers weekly in a school than the one-on-one coaching and it demands a single prep for each group of grade level or content teachers who meet weekly.

Elementary teachers estimated they received on average approximately 4 classroom-coaching sessions per year and 3 or less in middle schools. This is a ratio of the number of classroom teachers in the school calibrated to 3 hours per visit of potential one-on-one teacher access time in each school. Often teacher access to the coach is aligned with the teaching cycles of major standards being taught. The majority of elementary schools gauged their access to coach time as "once per cycle."

This one-on-one coaching allotment of time barely reaches all teachers in a building. It is simply not enough contact to make a significant difference in teaching practice and it is focused on teacher performance more than student achievement. Team coaching appears to be a better alternative because it can influence all teachers at least once or twice per week at elementary grade level meetings or at subject area meetings at the Upper Schools. When schools in other urban districts have made team

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[22] *Teach Plus*. (2012). Closing the Gap: Progress Over Two Years in T3 Schools. Online at:
http://www.teachplus.org/uploads/Documents/1355156579_T3ClosingtheGap.pdf

coaching their dominant format and one–on–ones their secondary format, these schools appear to be accelerating student achievement as a result of the overall increase of contact time with coaches.[23]

Also, it was hard to get coaches to estimate how much time they spent with each teacher on staff, since they had different criteria for scheduling teachers for one-on-ones and they cited many interruptions and idiosyncrasies to their schedule such as: required attendance at a variety of district trainings and planning meetings, principal requests for coaches to focus on teachers with performance issues or to assist with school administrative tasks. Most coaches described these interruptions to their schedule as out of their locus of control. In their desire to serve both district staff and their principal as supervisors, they viewed their primary coaching work as very compromised.

Routine grade level team meetings were not required or predictably scheduled in most schools but participation in school leadership teams such as instructional leadership teams, literacy leadership teams and Professional Learning Communities were more commonly scheduled.

District Demands Impact Teacher Access

The majority of principals commented on the loss of coach time at the school level because of too many required central office meetings and trainings for school coaches. Even the most supportive principals acknowledged that they didn't know what sorts of training their coach had received in these meetings or what the district expectations are for follow up. Principals are not usually copied on the central agendas for coach meetings and their communication with district coaches is rare. One principal stated, "Right now there is no structure in the district for Principals and Coordinators to talk together." One principal estimated the impact of district training on coaches, "Coaches are out of the building for central training 3-5 days per month or more. I have no clue about what trainings coaches receive. We are usually not sent agendas or explanations about their training content or the expectations placed on them by central."

In addition, teachers who participate in central office trainings can lose momentum with their students and coaches can lose time with their teachers. There was strong evidence in our interviews and observations of coaches and teachers not having adequate time to discuss student data, student work and to plan and debrief pre- and post conferences. Quick hall conversations and e-mails were methods cited by many coaches who ironically did not have time to debrief after planning and co-teaching a lesson with a teacher. Also, in addition to coach time spent on interventionist teaching of small groups

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[23] *Teach Plus. Ibid.*

of students, the issue of pullout of students for specialized interventions was cited by a few coaches as disruptive to scheduled classroom coaching episodes.

Finally, one central administrator noted a consistent increase over the past couple years in district initiatives requiring substitute funding on a daily basis, in some cases exceeding budget capacity.

Teacher Access Recommendations

1. *Institute team coaching as dominant access strategy; implement with fidelity*

2. *Reduce district time demands*

Explanation:

1. *Team Coaching*: The most efficient coaching method is team coaching by grade level since it has the potential to impact the teaching of every student in the school every week; minimally one and preferably two CPT's per week per teacher is the best way to implement this strategy. When grade or content level teams are supported by selective one-on-ones, they can produce strong results. One on ones are far more labor intensive for the coach and only reap benefits for one teacher after the coach has expended minimally 3 hours of prep time. However, the common planning time (CPT) team offered the most efficient, collaborative format.[24]

   Teacher access to teams only makes a difference when high impact activities are primary. According to recent research, teams become highly effective formats when executed with fidelity to the following common practices:

   - Job-alike teams of teachers who teach the same grade level, course or subject. They share and resolve common teaching challenges and address common priorities from student data.

   - Trained coach facilitators to guide the meeting, and introduce useful protocols so teachers can focus on sharing knowledge.

   - The coach prepares an agenda with desired outcomes for the meeting and brings any necessary data or student work samples collected by e-mail in advance. The cohort of

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[24] Gallimore, *op. cit.*

students served organizes the data by teacher and grade level in elementary and subject/grade at the secondary level.[25]

- The first weekly meeting is often used to "get granular" about the student data, calendar a standard set of inquiry cycle activities and target desired outcomes for all students, grouping them for differentiated instruction.

- The second weekly meeting can then be used to view modeling videos or other means of one on one lesson feedback, share curricular resources and approaches to getting smart about delivering differentiated pedagogy. One elementary teacher observed, "All coaches need to provide model lessons in the classroom captured by video. Direct modeling allows for teachers to make adjustments given the current class population and student needs."

- The one-on-ones are coordinated as a method to gather classroom feedback about how well the team lessons were delivered and differentiated. Video sections of the lesson can be easily shown on an i-pad during the second team meeting as a way to close the feedback loop on teacher practice. If video is not the preferred mode, a verbal description or low inference notes can offer valuable feedback to the grade level team on how the lesson went with an opportunity for suggestions. In some cases, a peer teacher can observe and they can report back verbally with their notes as a teaching pair.

2. *District Demands*: The best way to preserve coaching time for more teacher access is to eliminate district required time expenditures by coaches:

- Significantly reduce district required trainings/meetings

- Shift current interventionist work of coaches to new interventionist positions

- Shift coach time assigned to struggling teachers to school administrators or paid mentor teachers.

CPT Team Findings

Undeveloped CPT Team Culture

Common Planning Time (CPT) refers to weekly grade or subject level meetings for teachers to collaborate on lesson design and delivery. CPT implementation was documented in approximately one

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[25] *Teach Plus. op cit.*

third of the schools exhibiting conditions and practices that did not maximize the potential of the CPT structure.

Current CPT meetings are often adult-centric rather than student centric and tend to encourage different teacher perspectives and beliefs rather than norming teacher expectations based on data and reaching consensus on high quality lesson delivery. Most CPT meetings do not feedback how well the lesson went after it was implemented, a missed opportunity in offering valuable insights towards improving the impact of the lesson delivery next time.

Inconsistent and Inadequate CPT Time

The majorities of CPT teams are not currently scheduled routinely within each week, but rather, are driven by the length of the cycle of professional development. For many elementary schools this means three cycles per year with each grade level team meeting during one cycle per year for Math and one cycle per year for Literacy. For example, the schedule in Figure 6 reduces the third grade Math team meeting time to approximately 10 times per year (when holidays and testing dates are included), as compared with 30 times per year under a weekly schedule for CPT teams.

Team Meeting	Cycle 1: Sept. 30 – Dec. 6	Cycle 2: Dec. 9 – March 7	Cycle 3: March 17 – May 30
JK/K Mondays 11:25-12:10	Math		Lit
Gr. 1 Wednesday 12:10-12:55	Math	Lit	
Gr. 2 Wednesdays 10:45-11:30		Lit	Math
Gr. 3 Fridays 11:25-12:55		Math	Lit
Gr. 4 Wednesdays 12:10-12:55	Lit	Math	
Gr. 5 Mondays 1:40-2:25	Lit		Math

Figure 6: Sample Elementary Cycles with CPT team schedule

Every grade has team meeting weekly; every grade has coaching one on one weekly

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday	Friday
8:00	Meeting	STEM Club	Math Olympiad Club	ILT	Symphony Math
9:00	9:15 First Grade Observation 9:45 Kindergarten Team Meeting **(CPT)**	9:00 Grade 4 Team Meeting **(CPT)**	9:30 First Grade Observation	9:00 Gr 1. Team Meeting **(CPT)**	9:10 Gr4 Observation and Intervention
10:00		10:10 Gr. 5 Intervention		10:15 Gr. 4 Observation	
10:30	Meeting		10:45 Gr. 3 Observation	10:30 Gr. 3 Team Meeting **(CPT)**	10:30 Gr3 Observation
11:00		11:10 Gr. 5 Intervention		11:55 Gr. 3 Observation	11:30 Gr.3 Debrief
12:00	12:20 Grade 2 Observation and Intervention		12:10 Kindergarten Observation 12:50 Gr2. Intervention	Kindergarten Observation	12:20 Gr2 Observation and Intervention
1:00	1:25 Gr3 Observation or Co-teach	1:05 Grade 2 Team Meeting **(CPT)** 1:45 Grade 4 Co-teach	1:15 Meet with teacher	1:10 Teacher meeting	1:30 Gr4 Observation and Intervention
2:00	2:35 Grade 3 Debrief		Prep	2:00 Gr. 5 Team Meeting **(CPT)**	
3:00	Multiplication Club	Staff Meeting		Multiplication Club	

Figure 7: Ideal Elementary School Coach Schedule

Principals and coaches in these "cycle" schools feel that an ideal schedule would be similar to our sample schedule in Figure 7 which allows one team meeting per week per grade level and one coaching

session per week per grade level. This principal hired extra specialists and used platooning[26] (grouping two grade level content classes into one for a period) in order to free up teachers for team meetings. Schools who have not found the additional resources to hire extra staff or enough staff consensus to create a departmentalized platoon schedule have settled for a cycle schedule. They offer only one third of the CPT team meetings possible in the ideal schedule, and about a half of the scheduled one on ones.

One teacher's perspective captured the logistical problem of only one CPT per week per cycle, "CPT is never enough and we can only focus on one to two content areas each year…we need more time that 45 minutes per week. It is really sub-standard to think that teachers can authentically collaborate for 4-5 content areas, for differentiation and basic logistics with only 45 minutes. What other business would limit the essential planning components in their work?"

In the Upper School sample schedule (Figure 8) one grade level CPT typically meets only during one trimester (in this case, 7th Grade Literacy Team is highlighted for trimester 2) because of scheduling difficulties. In addition, Upper School coaches are expected to spend half of their time on coaching and half on intervention teaching of students. This schedule results in very small amounts of time allocated to high impact coaching on teams or in classrooms:

- Coaching only one grade level team for one trimester per year; during that trimester, the one team (Disciplinary Literacy 7th grade) meets once per week with one hour per day of classroom coaching time directed towards members of that team

- Math teachers in one grade level receive 1 hour per week of math coaching; other two grades receive 1 hour of coaching every two weeks.

In summary, the Figure 8 schedule results in a third of the team meeting and classroom coaching time that a full weekly schedule without intervention would provide. A sample time analysis of this upper school coach in Appendix G shows a full 46-hour scheduled workweek with prep time. The breakdown for a week of this coach time follows:

19.5 hours per week on coaching teams and classroom teachers
18.5 hours per week on intervention teaching
4 .0 hours a week on ILT meetings and School PD
2.0 hours per week on district coach meetings
2.0 hours of community and school events

From this examination of sample schedules we can see the strong variations and the layered expectations that have been placed on school coaches. In schools where coaching is a high priority for the principal, the best schedules emerge. In others, the available coaching time is so depleted that it makes it hard to attribute any results to it.

	M	T	W	T	F
1		Grade 7 8:55-9:50 Intervention	**7th Coaching 8:55-9:55**	ILT Walkthrough 8:55-9:40	Grade 8 8:55-9:55 Intervention
2	Grade 8 9:55-10:55	**7th Core 2 9:50-10:45**	Grade 8 9:55-10:55 Intervention	Grade 7 9:50-10:45 Intervention	Grade 6 9:55-10:55
3	Grade 6 10:55-11:55 Intervention		Grade 6 10:55-		
4				**8th Coaching 11:05-11:55 (alt weeks)**	
5	Lunch/Prep	Lunch/Prep	Lunch/Prep	**7th Core: SEI 12:00-12:25**	Lunch
6	**12:55-1:55 ILT**		**7th Core 2 12:55-1:55**	Lunch/Prep	Grade 7 12:55-1:55
7	**7th Core 2 1:55-2:55**	7th Team Meeting Disciplinary Literacy 1:25-2:10	Grade 7 1:55-2:55 Intervention	Grade 8 1:05-2:00 Intervention	**7th SEI/ 6th Coaching 2:10-2:55 (alt weeks)**
8				Grade 6 2:00-2:55 Intervention	
		3:15-4:15 Cabinet (alt weeks)			

(BOLD times are coaching related:)

Figure 8: Sample Trimester 2 Upper School Coach Schedule

Research calls for a stable setting for teacher teams with an administration that establishes, publishes and protects a calendar of scheduled meetings. Routine and consistent schedules build teacher attention and team focus. A central administrator commented that ideal scheduling of common planning time might be part of a longer school day: "Ideally I would love to see common planning time twice per week at elementary and upper school…This would allow us to organize in grade level teams—but this would demand that we extend the school day. Our last attempt failed by a small number of votes. We failed because the teachers did not trust that we would follow through."

A few principals have instituted unique approaches to scheduling such as platooning, and the scheduling of art, music and PE specialists to release teachers for coaching. Most principals have felt constrained by union regulations about the use of planning periods. One of the elementary principals explained his solution: "So there has been a little bit of a debate in our district whether a teacher has to use that 40 minute prep period to meet with the coach. So just to avoid all of that, I have actually built an extra period into the schedule so they have time to meet with the coach. And there is another prep period."

CPT Team and Schedule Recommendations

1. *Set cultural norms and expectations for CPT Meetings*

4. *Adopt routine schedules with priority for CPT teams and classroom coaching*

5. *Equalize scheduled access to CPT time across schools*

   Explanation:

1. *CPT Meeting Norms*: Assure that adult expectations are collaborative, seeking consensus at key junctures. Ensure CPT meetings are data-driven and diagnostic and that there is a feedback loop that explains to the original team how the lesson went.

Routine schedules: Routine schedules form habits to assure participation by key players, i.e., teachers, coaches, and interventionists. Predictable schedules take root in the daily schedule and remain a priority.

CPT Time: We have urged minimally one common planning time meeting per week, per teacher and the recommended shift from content to pedagogic coaching. This will eliminate compromised schedules that

lack equal and adequate time access to coaching for all teachers. All schools and principals should continue to learn from creative schedules that do meet the minimum expectations.[27]

One-on-One Findings

Many teachers value the one-one one coaching and extolled the value towards their professional growth. Primarily the more experienced teachers in our survey saw a direct link to student achievement implied by this format. Our observations revealed an uneven usage of team vs. one-on-one formats, although in general, one-on-ones dominated the overall use of coaching time in most schools. The quality of the interactions within this format differed significantly, particularly as models of data driven decision-making and scaffolded routines.

Lack of Data-Driven Decision Making

We observed few one-on-one coaching sessions that evidenced the use of data driven decisions; most gave data only cursory attention and substituted curriculum design and teacher coverage for data discussions. One notable exception occurred in an elementary school between a coach and a teacher who used data to drive the instructional design of their grade level teams. They looked at student work and formative assessment data, asked clarifying questions to agree on the lesson goal and outcome, and then modeled how to differentiate the instruction for different groups of students. This school modeled a very efficient and productive way to run a grade level team.

No Purposeful Link to Team Meetings

All one-on-ones are currently planned and conducted completely separately from the CPT team meetings. These are individualized professional designs for each teacher, often determined by teacher request or coach suggestion. An opportunity for team learning from the one-on-ones could meet the goal of individual teacher learning and team learning simultaneously. Given that one-on-one coaching is so intensive, best practice examples could be shared as models during team planning sessions to maximize their exposure for other members of the team. This would result in conducting fewer one-on-ones, but achieving a wider influence over more teachers and coaches. It will maximize time spent on modeling in ways that are new to the repertoire of teachers in the building, and decrease the time coaches are spending on planning lessons.

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[27] Ross, J. Teacher Efficacy and the Effects of Coaching on Student Achievement. Canadian *Journal of Education*. Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter, 1992), pp. 51-65.

Lessons can be linked back to the CPT grade level team meetings through the following mediums: cell phone video and on I-pads, low inference written notes and/or verbal renditions from the coach/teacher teams. We saw evidence of some of these methods used successfully in a few schools.

Lack of Differentiated Coaching

Our classroom observations of the one-on-ones revealed great variance in scaffold support on the continuum[28] of coaching heavy and coaching light, but not always applied appropriately. Coaching needs to be applied differentially, based on teacher expertise and professional needs stated one teacher, "In our building, the focus of CPT is never driven by teacher needs. The work is also never differentiated, based on numbers of years experience, expertise, etc." The type of scaffolded support offered and the differentiated match to teacher needs is the most critical decision of any effective coach.

- *Coaching Light*: Some coaches took a "coaching light" approach, with clear deference to teacher ownership; in these cases the coach interjects or quietly cues the teacher with suggestions, encourages students to keep on task, and jointly co-plans and debriefs the lesson. One teacher was frustrated with this approach: "I am not always sure what the coach expects me to do next; it is hard to be natural in these lessons."

- *Coaching Heavy*: Other coaches chose a "coaching heavy" approach, becoming the primary instructor, with the teacher as ancillary observer/support to the coach. In the most extreme coaching heavy cases, the coach plans and resources the lesson, sends scripted questions or details the night before, and delivers the lesson almost solo. In these cases the coach was more directive about teaching approaches and felt a highly controlled modeling was justified.

  One teacher strongly objected to a coaching heavy approach because of its implications, saying, "The culture at my school has made teachers feel flawed and in need of fixing. Instead of capitalizing on the great work and drive behind the practice, morale is low and teachers are feeling talked to and told what needs fixing."

  Individual coach approaches on this continuum, from light to heavy, need to be matched to each teacher's developmental needs in order to ensure their growth. In one school we observed two teachers responded to the same "coaching heavy" approach in different

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[28] Killion, J. (2009). Coaches' roles, responsibilities, and reach. In J. Knight (Ed.), *Coaching: Approaches and Perspectives* (pp.7-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

ways—one took ownership of the next lesson after observing the coach's modeling; the other became completely dependent on the coach, reluctant to generate her own ideas when prompted by the coach later in the session. Across the coach interviews and the observations, mismatched heavy and light coaching was seen as a barrier to teacher and coach professional growth.

Lack of Paced Coaching

Throughout our one on one observations there was much evidence of talented coaches modeling strong lessons but without developmental scaffolding to get the teacher to full ownership of the lesson design and delivery process in an appropriate time frame. In one dramatic case, the school-coaching plan was to have the coach do 100% of the modeling in September, not shifting to the teacher's full ownership until April. This delay in transition becomes a barrier to teacher ownership of instruction.

Imbalanced Coach Scheduling

Many coaches scheduled their lessons in the same classrooms with the same class of students. Coaches expressed that they did so because it is difficult to move between classrooms and particularly to deliver a single lesson when you don't know the students very well. One teacher agreed that coaching across many classrooms could also be difficult for students: "Students found it difficult to be taught by different people with different teaching styles on an inconsistent basis." However this imbalanced time investment resulted in narrowing the coach resource to fewer live situations that received a visit. It also caused fewer teachers to have access to fewer one-on-one coaching sessions in general. One teacher recommended, "Have coaching more equitably distributed to classrooms over multiple years. This means when it is a given classroom's turn, the coach is at the helm of the instruction. Together you examine student work, differentiate lessons, meet regularly to discuss big ideas. The current model is haphazard and often a short term hit and run approach."

One-on-One Recommendations

1. Prioritize data driven routines and create a purposeful feedback link to the team

2. *Differentiate scaffolded routines by matching to developmental needs*

3. *Implement gradual release pacing*

4. *Balance coach visits*

Explanation:

1. *Data-Driven Routines and Feedback*: A model one-on-one should be data driven, diagnostic to the students in that particular class and should make a provision to feedback to the CPT team where the lesson design originated. If team meetings become primary then one-on-ones become ways to share practice through feedback to the team.

2. *Scaffolded Routines*: Coaches should diagnose teacher needs, readiness, and strengths to design appropriate coaching approach and support.

3. *Gradual Release Pacing*: Teachers need scaffolded, differentiated learning opportunities modeled by coaches with a gradual release of design and delivery responsibility over time. An accelerated "gradual release" plan would be more accommodating if it was carefully aligned to differing student data patterns and coach/teacher developmental expertise.

4. *Balanced Coach Visits*: Coaches should build an equitable schedule so to reach more teachers in the school.

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Findings

Undeveloped ILT structure

We observed an ILT/PLC meeting in each school. In the majority of schools, the ILT was regarded as an administrative, logistical structure that had unrealized potential to influence instruction. In many cases the ILT was used interchangeably with the PLC and there was confusion about the differences. In a few schools, the ILT is wisely designed as the "meta-meeting" of all instructional coaching activities. In these cases, it tracks the promising practices revealed in grade level teams, 1:1 coaching, and may organize learning walks and peer observations to break down the classroom walls and allow cross-classroom and grade level learning. In essence this is a PLC structure because the focus has shifted from teacher development to student learning and it integrates teacher learning into a community of practice with shared norms and goals. Recently, empirical research[29] suggests that well-developed PLCs have positive impact on both teaching practice and student achievement.

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[29] Newmann, F. M., et al. (1966). *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Stoll, L., Thomas, S. & Wallace, M. (2005) Creating and sustaining professional learning communities. Research Report Number 637. London, England: General Teaching Council for England, Department of Education and Skills.

ILT Leadership

The current ILT's and PLC's are varied in design and purpose and all need to address tensions between their coaches, principals and the district to make them more systemic. In general, most of the principals and coaches we spoke to seemed to be ready for a broader gauge, more collaborative structure focused more purposefully on improving instruction. One Upper School principal saw the ILT as a potential driver of a coherent school vision: "We need a more effective leadership team with data and a vision of where we are going, using the same lens to organize faculty meetings, CPT and early release days. This is what the data told us to do—here is how we do it." An elementary principal also saw the unrealized potential of the ILT structure: "We meet twice per month to define and plan how we will spend our 35 training hours. But it could be much more than that."

One school coach asked for a school meeting structure and conditions that extend beyond the current administrative intent of the ILT: "We need more transparency and communication between the departments—coach roles could gain more traction if the department had a clearer vision of how we are all interacting—if they articulated that we are working together, not just as a coaching body but also as an instructional leadership team where the intersection of this work is happening for our teachers."

Principals will need leadership training to fulfill this role, according to one teacher: "I think the main thing that could improve coaching at my school is for ALL building administrators to receive adequate training in curriculum, classroom management and special education. Coaches MUST have the support and engagement of knowledgeable administrators in order to promote excellence in teaching."

School and professional goals drive the culture

Finally, school goals were not given emphasis in the ILT. A central administrator felt that implementing school goals should be made central in the ILT, "SIPs are not drivers of many of the ILTs—so the ILT agendas tend to be reactive to the latest teacher need or school problem that has surfaced. Goals are lengthy and written in detail, but not drivers…District goals are more process oriented in CPS, and so are the SIPs."

Train everyone

Most principals, coaches and teachers involved in the current ILT or PLC structure do not feel that they have been adequately trained for their roles.

One elementary coach explained, "I was new last year and did not even receive an orientation to the role upon entry. Now I have deduced my role from watching and learning from others, but I am uneasy

about not knowing what is really expected." Coaches would benefit from training to maximize this structure from a compliance structure focused on administration and logistics to a structure that becomes the instructional soul of the school.

ILT Recommendations

1. *Restructure the undeveloped ILT to a meta-functioning PLC*

2. *Operate the PLC as the organizing systemic, goal driven force of the school*

3. *Design principal leadership role*

4. *Offer training and support to all parties*

   Explanation:

   1. *Meta-functioning PLC:* The ILT should be renamed and redefined as the PLC with a broader purpose. It is the meta-meeting of all instructional activities in the school, focused on desired student learning outcomes.

   2. *Organizing Systemic Force of PLC*: The PLC becomes the place for cross sharing of practices by grade level teams, tracked school goal forums and the mechanism for both horizontal and vertical sharing of promising practices and collaborative problem solving. It is where the school's instructional vision is enacted and reinforced by all participants.

   3. *Principal Instructional Leadership*: The principal should lead the PLC and strengthen the communication and relations between principals, coaches and the district because they shape the school's instructional culture. This will invariably translate into closer contacts with teachers and greater teacher investment in the coach strategies leading to the achievement of school goals.

   4. *Training and Support*: Offer explicit training and support to principals, coaches and teachers for PLC protocols and systemic levers to raise student achievement.

RTI Intervention Findings

Context

Interventions were introduced as a district requirement for school based coaches in 2013 as a Response to Intervention (RTI) strategy. RTI required coaches to do granular data analyses, diagnosis and lesson design for individual struggling students; these identified students are either taught by school coaches on a daily basis in an intervention pullout or push in model. Currently school coaches at the elementary

level are spending 10% to 20% of their time teaching students in need of RTI intervention. Upper Level coaches, because of the larger school population, estimated 40% to 50% of their time devoted to this issue. This coach time is spent either directly with students in segregated small groups, or in some cases the coach conducts individual student diagnosis and delivery of services. This pilot captured coach energy and time in a way that significantly reduced their focus on high impact coaching activities.

Intervention Time Requirement

In almost all schools, coaches and Principals commented on how dramatically this central requirement had redirected the focus of the coach role, leaving very little time for team CPT meetings by grade level, or one-on-one coach/teacher observations and modeling in classrooms. Most principals did not think RTI was a good use of the coach's time. One commented, "Because of the RTI model my literacy coach is actually doing direct teaching instead of working with our PLC or data team." When we observed the coaches, they stated that their coaching duties had been seriously compromised, despite the fact that some acknowledged that getting more individualized with tier 2 and 3 students is essential to accelerate student learning.

Inadequate Diagnosis

The intention of the RTI pilot was to customize and offer personalized attention to accelerate intervention learning. Coaches and principals expressed skepticism that this approach is making a difference, and they all regretted the loss of valuable coach time for team meetings and one on ones in the building. One central administrator who had frequently observed these intervention classes this year felt that diagnoses conducted by teachers and coaches of these students were mostly inadequate; they were often lacking expertise and input from specialists trained in special needs diagnosis. Therefore some of customized delivery of services to support these students is likely not to produce the desired achievement gains.

Data Analysis Plus

The data analyses conducted in this process tended to be more granular than the average CPT team meeting, and could serve as a powerful foundation for more inclusive teaching in general for all students, if combined with diagnostic input from special education trained interventionists. The role of the CPT should routinely include diagnostic input from interventionists. CPT teams can learn from their more granular diagnosis with an eye towards benefiting all students. One coach described it as, "Ten professionals sitting around a table talking about the progress of every single student in RTI." Grade

level inclusion teams would then understand better how to deliver mastery for all students with differentiated learning groupings.

Intervention Recommendations

1. *Merge the best of CPT team and RTI staff into a stronger diagnostic team.*

2. *Redeploy an interventionist per school building to focus on grade level team meetings and to simultaneously free up coach time for high impact activities*

3. *Assign a few OSS Coordinators to the central coordinator team so that they can offer school coaches diagnostic/intervention support for their coaching teams.*

   Explanation:

   1. *Merge CPT with RTI intervention strategies.* In the coach-driven intervention effort, small groups of students are scheduled for regular classes with coaches as teachers. If the CPT team and the RTI team's efforts were merged and the delivery shifted from coaches to interventionists, the coach schedule is then freed up to do pedagogic coaching for the entire day without intervention duties. The CPT teams would expand to regularly include expert diagnostic staff, with Title I and interventionist expertise. The added benefit is evident: the diagnostic method of the RTI team can become the "gold standard" and would result in differentiated activities for all students.

   2. *Supplement Interventionist Services to Coaching.* Add an interventionist with credentials and training to diagnose and provide special needs services for kids who need them. This would have the added benefit of freeing up every coach to have more time to devote to team meetings as a result of either absorbing their current intervention classes into the regular classroom or scheduling them for push out with assigned interventionists.

   3. *Assign two coordinators from OSS to the central team of content Coordinators* to assure support to coaching teams for diagnostic/ intervention decisions. Grade level or content CPT teams should be able to get all resources they need through the navigation and support of coordinators.

School and District Goal Findings

Lack of Goal Alignment

School coaches in most schools lead their school improvement goal setting process for both Math and ELA. However, the alignment of school goals to district goals is unclear to most principals and coaches.

While everyone sees a general relationship to closing the achievement gap, our interviews revealed that they are unable to connect specific district goals with their local school goals.

The alignment of school and district goals is important towards maintaining a shared vision and assuring a focused delivery of student achievement results. Schools that are aligned tend to be more productive and focused on student outcomes.[30] Results are accelerated when everyone is pulling in the same direction.
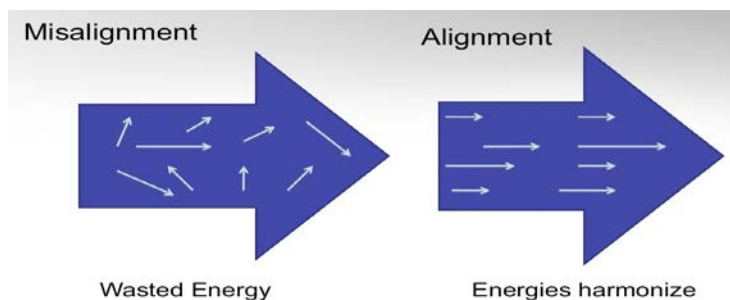
Figure 9: Senge: Aligned Vision

An elementary school principal detailed the lack of explicit alignment of school and district goals, "We have goals set up in our school improvement plan and our goals are pretty aligned to a good segment of the professional development that we're doing. But I can't always necessarily say that our plan and the work our coaches do are totally aligned to the district, even though the bigger district goal is around closing the achievement gap. I think we have a district plan and we have district goals, but some of the district PD that we do and some of the budgetary decisions we make are not directly aligned to a district goal."

One administrator captured the structural problem of lack of performance targets: "If you look at the school improvement plans, they don't all have a shared goal with the district; we have very general school goals now without performance targets. School goals might state what they are working on and what approach they are taking, but there is no performance target set in advance so no way to measure if they achieved it, for example, "We are working on writing—practicing open response questions."

Another central administrator seconded, "Our current district goals are not performance oriented enough. There is no district improvement plan based on a three-year cycle and we really need one."

In addition, we found issues of principal, superintendent turnover and board election timelines also contributed to the lack of alignment between district and school goals. One administrator stated, "The

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[30] Senge, P. M. (1994). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization* (p. 14). New York: Currency Doubleday.

board sets goals once every two years; they run for reelection every two years. Overdependence on who is driving the train and turnover at the top gives the goal setting an uneven stop and start mode."

One elementary math coach linked principal stability with alignment of school and district goals, "We had high principal turnover for years and constantly changing goals, but now with the stability of the current principal, it feels like school improvement goals are better coordinated with district goals. We are not reinventing the wheel every September, the way we were when the principals kept changing." As a result of this newfound stability, an outcome-driven approach to coaching is evident in this school and there is staff buy-in to use data to inform instruction.

Indirect Coaching Outcomes

There is general consensus that there are too many instructional variables at play in the CPS schools to claim direct student achievement results from coaching. However, many coaches, teachers and principals believe that they see a relationship. One principal expressed the views of other principals who see coaching as a lever to improved performance but don't have the metrics to prove it, "The Superintendent asked me a long time ago, 'What is the point of coaching?' And I said, 'To me, it develops the kind of professional culture that I want our school to be, that we are ongoing learners, we are reflecting on our practice all the time.' And he kind of pushed back, 'But what is the result in student achievement?' I said, 'I can't tie it directly, and I can't say because we have coaches this is what our scores are. It's not that simple.'"

Behavioral Change Documentation

As discussed previously, it is hard to bring forth evidence of coaching impact because collection systems are not in place to inform practice. An elementary principal believes that coaching is powerful enough to change teacher behavior, "But I really do believe that coaching is a major way to close achievement gaps and that teachers need to see coaching as more than just an opportunity to reflect; they should walk away with something they do differently." Another principal wondered why coaches spend so much time planning with teachers rather than modeling, "We get more positive behavioral change out of modeling; teachers should know how to plan already, we should focus on showing them skills they don't already have." However, such behavioral changes in teaching and learning resulting from coaching are not currently documented so it is hard to assert them as evidence informing progress on school goals.

Lack of connected communication

One central administrator felt that the lack of connection between school and district goals is due to lack of that communication, "Although they [district goals] are passed out to principals, they are not emphasized and school goals are not purposefully linked to district goals." This finding is consistent with comments made by principals and coaches in their interviews; many claimed little or no knowledge and orientation to the coach job description.

School and District Goal Recommendations

1. *Align school and district goals through a shared district vision*

2. *Set school goals first with clear performance expectations*

3. *Create a feedback loop of documented data and behavioral changes of students and teachers tied to coaching*

4. *Align measureable district goals to school goals*

5. *Create purposeful communications and incentivize progress to generate ownership of district and school goals*

Explanation:

1. *Alignment:* Align school and district goals by generating a shared district vision for a three year plan; be explicit about the shared vision and its expectations; share with schools as a written document.

2. *Sequence:* School goals set first, with clear outcome expectations. Ideally, the school goals should be formulated first, based on data from the most recent student assessments and teacher observations. Those closest to the students should have the formative priority for goals that are driven by student needs and set up a documentation system that charts progress.

3. *Behavioral Changes*: Document behavioral changes of students and teachers tied to coaching and establish a feedback loop of data to inform progress and future goals. Establish this expectation as part of a set of benchmarks.

4. *Align measureable district goals to school goals.* District goals should be derived from the strong patterns found across all school goals, plus some executive additions that make sense for this board and superintendent in this community. They are responsible for creating the conditions to make the achievement of district goals more likely. For example, the reorganization improved

equity for all students in the district. Ideally, school and district goals have measureable *outcomes and school goals are shared or linked to broader, but aligned district goals.*

5. *Communication*: Establish strategic communication between district and school goal setters and orientation sessions of key implementers during the goal setting process.

School Based Staff Development Findings

Not Enough Local School PD Time

All school coaches spend significant time on designing and delivering many sessions of local PD. We found by examining coach schedules that many school training initiatives compete for too little professional time of teachers after school and during the summer. There is not enough school-based training driven locally around pedagogical topics since some of the 36 hours of contracted after-school training is currently claimed by district offerings. In the sample below, 26.5 hours of school PD were offered with 9.5 hours of district PD.

August 28th 9-11am - Grades 3-5 a practical use of reader's notebooks to support writing about reading.
October 1st - JK-5: The Gradual Release of Responsibility within the Workshop Model
October 23 1-3pm: Closer look at Spelling at the school Part 2
November 5th 2:35 - 3:35: Writing About Reading - Asking beyond the text and about the text questions. (JK- 2)
November 12th 2:35 - 4:00 Genre Studies
November 19th 2:35 - 3:35 Writing About Reading - Asking beyond the text and about the text questions. (3-5)
December 17th 2:35 - 4:00 A Closer Look at Spelling at the school, Part 3
January 7th 2:35 - 4:00 Spelling/Vocabulary
January 14th 2:35 - 4:30 Genre Study Part 2 - Inquiry approach to Fantasy
February 25th 2:35 -3:35 JK-2 Writing About Reading in the Primary Grades - Looking at Student Work
March 11th 1:00 - 3:00 - Complex Text and Close Reading
April 8th 2:35 - 3:35 JK -2 - Combined workshop with Math focus TBD
May 6th 2:35 - 3:35 - Follow up for Spelling/Science

Figure 10: Sample School Professional Development Offerings

As we interviewed coaches about how they structured their school professional development (PD), they did indicate a preference towards pedagogical topics but were frustrated about the lack of time they were allocated: "We design PD based largely on our School Improvement Plan (SIP) and our broadest goals: effective differentiation, data to inform instruction and more formal and informative classroom assessments. If we had more time we could meet the current demand for differentiation more fully, and

this sort of training will make a difference in student achievement, so it should be prioritized over competing topics."

Teacher respondents to the teacher survey rated differentiation as the training that most improved their teaching and cited teacher-made videos as the best way to learn it. One teacher stated, "Integrate more use of videos from our own classrooms into PD time. There is nothing like visually observing educators implement a [differentiation] strategy and then having a chance to debrief with peers."

Little Cross-sharing of School Practices

There is little evidence of cross sharing of school-based offerings, amongst schools in the same feeder cluster. School based training can develop collaborative leaders amongst the school cohort of teachers and through partner structures: cross-school or cluster exchanges, visitations, collaborations or jointly sponsored trainings. These structures can build a rich school-based expertise around relevant coaching topics. These partner structures encourage personal knowledge developed in teaching practice to be shared, refined and vetted.

The call for more cross-sharing opportunities to break the buffers of school isolation come also from principals, "How are we moving school achievement forward? These conditions don't yet exist, not at the district level. Each school is isolated, so conversations may be great at an individual school, but coaches and principals would benefit greatly from a wider discussion about coaching practice and effective implementation."

According to researchers Mehta, Gomez and Bryk, networked improvement communities allow practitioners to work together in developing knowledge that is most relevant for practice. Practitioners work across school sites to develop and share expertise as they grow across the course of their careers. This more inclusive, practice-centered approach has the potential to reshape the ethos and identity of the field—"from highly atomized to one where teachers see themselves as part of a common profession that draws on the shared stock of knowledge to consistently help students learn."[31] Those doing the work of teaching should be challenged to model and lead in these networks or cohorts with some of their best work.

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[31] Mehta, J., Gomez, L., & Bryk, A. S. (2012). Building on practical knowledge: The key to a stronger profession is learning from the field. *The futures of school reform,* 35-64. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

School Professional Development

1. *Increase local school pedagogical professional training, especially differentiation, Understanding by Design and Common Core.*

2. *Increase cross-school training and sharing of common teaching goals and methods in pathway schools.*

   Explanation:

   1. *Increase local PD* focused on instructional pedagogical strategies, especially differentiation of teaching methods to Common Core standards. One teacher commented, "We need more targeted instruction to the biggest challenges we currently face as educators, such as differentiation of instruction and support and resources for Common Core teaching."

   2. *Increase cross-school training through school and pathway cluster trainings* around common teaching goals and methods. At least 70% of the allocated PD time should be reserved for training on pedagogic lesson design with embedded UBD content. District coaches were hired as trainers of trainers, but they are no longer necessary if schools team with their pathway schools to share best practices and make good pedagogic ideas contagious. The Aspiring Leaders Program now identifies model practices and arranges walk thrus that allow for deep leadership learning. This model should be imitated in the pathway clusters to assure cross pollenization This sort of networked training has potential to become high ownership and to develop leadership in all school coach participants. School coaches will strengthen their differentiated training of teachers in their building through this vehicle, and school coaches and coordinators will rotate their facilitative leadership role in these pathway meetings.

Principal Role Findings

Lack of Distributed Leadership Knowledge

Principals play a critical role in promoting the productivity and contributions of a coach in a school. An elementary principal thinks principals need training to understand better how coaches fit in to a distributed leadership system: "Principals need to learn more about 'how adults learn best' to guide coaches in their work with teachers." Our principal interviews revealed that some CPS principals realize the strong potential of the coaching program to improve MCAS student achievement results in the building. They sit in on CPT meetings and contribute to prioritizing data findings, but only in a few

instances have they set in place distributed leadership roles of teachers and coaches as conditions of learning that leverage coaching to create desired outcomes.

Principals need to understand the relation between distributed conditions of learning and coaching. One elementary school coach stated: "Our principal has the vision but not the methods—he looks to coaches and teachers for distributive leadership, but they can't do it on their own."

Collective teacher agency through distributed leadership at school level is emerging as the most effective approach to achieving desired outcomes. Principal support is critical to achieving better student outcomes, but it must be embedded with distributed leadership of teachers and coaches that is structured for collaborative productivity.[32]

Principal Autonomy

About half the principals currently have established strong coaching cultures grounded in their schools. However, "floating autonomy" persists in the remaining schools. Floating autonomy is principal or school autonomy that is not grounded in strong instructional knowledge and/or not aligned to school or district goals.

Hargreaves' research on distributed leadership reveals that principals without strong instructional leadership or alignment to school and district goals tend not to achieve strong results.[33] Their autonomous decisions are adult and school centric, but not usually student centric and often don't support the overall district system. These schools are often characterized by a soft attitude towards holding themselves accountable for student achievement gains. Very few of their decisions are grounded in a sense of urgency to get all students to mastery. Individual processes and idiosyncratic priorities gauge progress rather than a self-reinforcing system of specified data and outcomes.

The importance of principals as learning leaders was a theme reinforced throughout central and coach interviews, "I have seen situations where coaches are left to their own devices to run things. In these schools, principals are not comfortable in the instructional realm, and they don't really have the respect of staff from an instructional perspective. Principals who use coaches in makeshift ways make the coach feel like they have divided loyalties and purposes." An Upper School coach agreed, "Principals who understand either instruction or the role of the coach with instruction, those schools are moving into

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[32] Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2008). Distributed leadership: democracy or delivery? *Journal of Educational Administration*, *46*(2), 229-240.

[33] *Ibid.*

pretty awesome places, and schools where principals don't get the role or purpose of the coach, I feel their schools are pretty stagnant."

Another central office administrator added, "I think there needs to be someone [as principal] who has done this work, in the sense of understanding not only curriculum and instruction but the purpose of assessment, and being willing to share student work and look at student work together, not seeing it as personal or critical, but as a learning opportunity. I think we need to set conditions for principals where feedback is seen as growth and not criticism. I also think there needs to be a willingness of a principal to really let himself or herself put down the barriers and be open to new learning and to be transparent enough so that you can tell people what you don't know."

Tight Control vs. Gradual Release

Gradual release is an approach rapidly gaining support in the school system change effort, both nationally and globally. In this model, central control starts out tight but once systemic capacity is built locally, a commensurate gradual release from centralized control is earned. In the McKinsey global study, a school system that needs significant improvement is placed in a tight model of control, but some are gauged ready for collaborative development and more autonomy, and they are offered more autonomy.[34]

In New York, San Diego and Chicago, central district leaders of instructional initiatives realized that they didn't release control soon enough, resulting in an over dependency on central training when a gradual release would have built autonomy.[35] The natural inclination of district organizations is to preserve central training initiatives even as they are questioning their value. One administrator observed, "In CPS maybe we released control too early since we did not have clarity of expectations and maybe that's why the framework didn't serve its purpose—but we are ready for a new framework now. For example, lack of standardized schedule for a standardized curriculum creates lack of equity and access. We need to define those issues that need to be tight and hold to them, otherwise there is not internal accountability to them."

Low Instructional Conditions

The principal is responsible for setting up the conditions and structures that will make the system successful in achieving desired school outcomes. Principals need to have a basic understanding of which

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[34] Mourshed, *op cit*.

[35] Robinson, M. (2010). School perspectives on collaborative inquiry: Lessons learned from New York City. *Consortium for Policy Research in Education* (pp. i-ii; 4, 9-12; 51-54; 60): New York, New York.

conditions are essential to supporting coaching. A supervisor of principals observed the importance of building trust in a coaching context: "Principals, especially new ones, need to build the explicit culture of their professional learning community, a culture of trust. One principal waited until her third year to start walkthroughs because it would have been counterproductive to start before the trust was formed."

One supervisor described what a strong principal looks like when establishing strong coaching conditions, "Principals who are hands on; principals who establish a culture of inquiry and try to mitigate the engrained defensiveness; principals who try to develop a culture around reflectiveness. They say to their staff: 'Let's make it all about data, not about our personal attachments—really about kids.' These are principals who have taken staff to training around how to run PLC's and have walked the talk with their schools."

According to recent studies, essential coaching conditions must include minimally: adequate time for collaborative inquiry teams to meet, commitment of the principal to be a support partner in the coaching work, intelligent distributed leadership and decision-making by the principal to talented teacher leaders; cultivating a growth mindset amongst teachers; support for data-driven differentiated lessons, and coach hiring and training aligned to performance expectations.[36]

These findings suggest that the principal will need to establish the following structures: CPT and grade level teams scheduled to meet minimally once per week at elementary (or as a subject area team at the Upper School); convert the ILT to a PLC structure focused on assuring communication across the teams, setting and achieving school level goals, and sharing some of the strong instructional practices that emerge from the grade level teams. An elementary principal whose building is focused on coaching called for student accountability between the coach, principal and the teachers, "Coaches should have ownership over students, results and progress. It is very important to get principals and coaches to have a tight dialogue about goal priorities and outcomes."

Principal Role Recommendations

1. *Train principals in distributed leadership implementation strategies*

2. *Set clear expectations for principals to implement a strong inquiry/PLC coaching model*

3. *Establish a gradual release framework for principals to gauge their implementation of coaching conditions and structures*

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[36] Taylor, J. (2008) *Instructional Coaching: The State of the Art*. In M. Mangin & S.R. Stoelinga, (Eds). Effective Teacher Leadership: Using Research to Inform and Reform, pp.10-35. New York, NY: Teachers College Press (RT).

Explanation:

1. D*istributed leadership creates a systemic approach to instructional coaching* within the school and is linked appropriately to district support. Principal support is much more than achieving better student outcomes; it must be embedded with distributed leadership that is structured for collaborative productivity. The principal must be the instructional partner of the coach; they need to schedule and plan as one.

Benchmark expectations for principals to implement a strong inquiry team model in every school, organized by grade level and minimally for Math and ELA disciplines. The prioritized scheduling of common planning time would set this implementation up for a distributed leadership approach to PLC's, gaining a higher ratio of teacher access and stronger links between team planning and school PD aligned with school and district goals.

Design a gradual release framework for schools that gauges the essential coaching conditions and structures and in return offers more autonomy from district training, mandates and supervision. Principals should negotiate hiring and training for the staff that is aligned with the gradual release framework.

> *Note:* For the supervisory role of Principals see "Coach Evaluation Findings" pp.74-75.

DISTRICT BASELINE DATA

Baseline Data: District Delivery Problems and Implications

What areas of the current school-coaching model demonstrate need for improvement at the district level? How can we strengthen its delivery to students and teachers?

District Level Context

District level recommendations are an essential part of the recommendations addressed in this report. In order to provide systemic support for mutually held goals between central offices and the schools, the role of central office transforms from being the source of new initiatives to a central role calibrated to assure that conditions, structures and resources sought by the schools are available to ensure their success. A new system of school advocacy is called for that is responsive to school needs and holds them accountable to mutually aligned goals. Once the ownership of the desired outcomes is shared and resources aligned, the ability of schools to deliver results will accelerate.

District Coach and Coordinator Findings

Throughout this study there was general consensus amongst school coaches and principals that a focused delivery close to the student was most the valued coaching approach because of its potential to accelerate student learning more directly. The school autonomy research reinforces this belief: the closer any position is to students, the greater the potential to understand student needs and influence student learning.[37] Teachers, coaches and principals voiced this organizational belief from their different perspectives in their interviews and we observed a series of interactional dilemmas surfacing amongst district coaches who report centrally and deliver services at schools.

First, district coaches are spread too thin across all the schools they deliver services to and they are too distant from the daily act of teaching to make a significant difference in daily practice routines. One district coach captured it, "I no longer have the time to observe and give feedback to all coaches who I have been assigned. I spend more and more time on district activities such as central meetings, curriculum design and trainings so that I can train others. "

Second, there was strong redundancy found between the actions of coordinators and district coaches, with both trying to observe and support school coaches at the school level and both trying to deliver

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[37] Nadelstern, E. (2013) *Ten Lessons from New York City Schools*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

services to teachers through school coaches. Also, in central coach meetings, both coordinators and district coaches took facilitative roles formulating the agenda and delivering training, information and counsel to school coaches. The overlap between these two roles creates redundancy and confusion. The lack of coordination with principals causes school coaches to feel that they are constantly called into district level meetings and trainings without much regard for the interruptions to their school based delivery of services that is their top priority.

Third, district coaches expressed a lack of immediacy in their relationships at the school level: "I think the number one thing is the quality of the relationship between the coach and the teacher, and the understanding about why that coach is there. I think the challenge for the district coach is this feeling of, 'What is my role and what level of confidentiality do I maintain? How do I communicate my purpose in each visit to make it effective?" Another district coach expressed reluctance to call issues directly from a distance, fearing the school's lack of receptivity to an outsider's view: "I have a teacher over here that is not doing the district curriculum at all. As a district person, I want to come back and be able to say to my coordinator, 'This is a school that is not even doing our curriculum' but how much of that can I report and still have an entry point back into the school?"

Fourth, a district coach acknowledged that maintaining personal relationships with school coaches and teachers at the school level is hard, labor intensive and has little impact unless a learner stance is maintained, "So there is an area of content expertise that a coach needs to bring, but if you are the expert and can't be seen as a learner alongside the teacher I think that teachers are unable to see you as a coach. I mean curriculum is important and content is important, but you can have those and it not work. If you don't have a learner stance it doesn't matter how much content you know. So I think it's a lot like a teacher, it doesn't matter how good your content knowledge is if you can't relate to students."

We reviewed the district coach job description, org chart and sample schedules and concluded that they were not able to deliver fully on their duties because of their daily distance from the schools and the fact that their job is untenable, layered between their central coordinator supervisors and school coaches who they observe, train and give feedback. Because of the interactional difficulties, district coaches gravitated toward central duties that were less conflicted, and the priority they once held for school delivery has gradually reduced the amount of time they spend on these activities.

We revisited the primary reason district coaches were hired originally, according to central administrators: to be content trainers to school coaches. With the creation of a new CPS adopted curriculum, there is less of a need for original content design for each lesson. If the coordinators adopt a

stance of coach support, they can help school coaches navigate the on-line system of curriculum resources. The role of the district coaches is no longer necessary, and central training can be transformed into more collaborative school based and optional network training for cross-sharing and making good ideas contagious.

District Coach/Coordinator Recommendations

1. *Eliminate district coach positions*

2. *Revise coordinator position to support pedagogic coaches with customized curriculum, data, intervention and video resources.*

3. *Invite schools to create pathway optional structures for exchanging and modeling best ideas.*

   Explanation:

   1. *Eliminate district coach positions* in favor of a revised structure of coordinators and school based pedagogic coaches with newly defined roles.

   2. *Revise coordinator position* with new roles as curriculum and data navigators for the pedagogic coaches. Transfer two OSS coordinators to the coordinator group to offer integrated support to school coaches on interventionist strategies.

   3. *Create new structures for a pathway structure* of school PLC's for school coach leadership and team training opportunities.

District Operational Support Findings

The district currently sponsors a wide array of initiatives and supports additional staff deployed in the schools to assure implementation of adopted programs. Layers of central office staff have been hired to train and supervise these programs and their staff members. These resources exist because of the district's desire to support implementation in schools. However, the number of initiatives ahs grown and school level staff feel a lack of ownership and trust in these central decisions. One teacher cautioned that despite positive effects of coaching in the school, the district's constant stream of new initiatives and the shifting methods of measuring gains make teaching a "moving target."

To achieve this plan, there are some essential staffing, budget, reporting and communication implications. These changes will assure that the conditions of strong coaching are attainable by all schools and that structures and supports to assure their systemic implementation are equally accessible

to all schools. Most of these have already been described and their rationale documented in this report, but they bear repeating here to present a top-line summary of the district support role:

Operational Implications:

1. *Staffing and Role Revisions:*

   (See Appendix B for Pedagogic Coach Job Description)

   School Coach: Reduce to one pedagogic coach per school, rewrite common job description and interested coaches reapply, Principal hires with input from central coordinators

   District Coach: All positions eliminated because they become an unnecessary layer above the principals; shift from district to principal supervision of school coaches and more school based PD offerings, both within schools and cross-schools. The revised coordinator position will offer a tangible district support menu for curriculum, customized data as well as interventions.

   Coordinators: Support role to all school coaches and their principals. Principals negotiate with coordinators for customized trainings in central resources of data analysis, curriculum and intervention.

   Approximate Budget Implications: 2013 total expenditure: $3,494,391

   Eliminate District-wide Coaches ($833,590 savings include CRLS coaches deleted from 2014 budget)

   Eliminate Content School Coaches ($1,443,551 savings)

   Redeploy one intervention specialist per school (neutral)

   Total estimated savings for 2015 implementation = $2,267,141

   Reporting and Supervisory Relationships:

   (See Appendix C for Current Reporting Chart and Recommended Chart of Changes)

   School Coach: Reports only to the Principal (with support but not supervision from Curriculum Coordinators)

   Coordinators: Role shifts to become critical link between principals/school coaches and menu of training resources in curriculum, data and intervention. Reports to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Assistant Superintendent of Support Services; coordinators can continue to represent different content disciplines but two OSS Intervention Coordinators should be assigned from existing central OSS positions as part of this new linkage to principals/school coaches;

OSS personnel will continue to report to OSS Assistant Superintendent; role of Ed Tech Coordinator will address videography needs at school level for team sharing option)

Principals: No change in reporting to Assistant Supt/Deputy Supt.

2. *Goal Changes: District and School:*

Mutually reinforcing/data based and inductive: School goals are set each fall based on MCAS and formative data by principal, school coaches and teaching staff. These goals are sent to district level and shared with school board; board and administration review and make adjustments to district goals to assure alignment.

Structures: Meetings and Resources:

Principal, School Coach, Coordinators: These three parties will form a triad of coordination on all coach related decisions.

Coordinated calendar of meetings: All meetings and trainings sponsored by district office must be coordinated with schools and often will come at the request of schools; a central calendar will be maintained on line to assure good communication and adequate funding for sub releases. These requests should go to the coordinators with final approval resting at the Assistant Superintendent level.

3. *Practice Changes:*

Principals will be asked to schedule minimally 1 CPT periods per week for each classroom teacher, by grade level in elementary and subject area in upper schools.

Principals will be asked to establish a PLC in lie of ILT in each school with expanded instructional role.

Interventionist are assigned to participate in common planning time teams and two OSS Coordinators assigned centrally to Coordinator Team to meet the needs of coaches seeking diagnostic support.

A set of school benchmarks will be developed (see draft in Appendix G) for collecting formative data about coach implementations.

BASELINE DATA:
INSTRUCTIONAL AGENCY and CAPACITY

How does the current CPS coaching model build agency and instructional capacity?

- *Review and evaluate the level of agency teachers and coaches feel in their ability to impact teaching and learning at their assigned grade level.*

- *Review and evaluate the level of capacity of teachers and instructional coaches, and demonstrated ability to effectively execute roles and responsibilities, around content, instructional modeling, data analysis, and facilitation of Professional Learning Communities.*

In the previous sections, we have elaborated on the barriers and conflicts for coaches in fulfilling their coach role, as they currently understand it. Coach agency is clearly limited by conditions, structures and expectations that are inhibiting their ability to claim a healthy sense of agency over their job. Almost every category we documented cites evidence about barriers to coach agency. To address these dilemmas, we have recommended a new pedagogic role, job description, staffing/ reporting plans, and pedagogic focus for coaching in CPS.

However, we believe the agency that coaches feel they now have is inextricably tied to the agency of teachers, since the two roles are co-dependent and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, we solicited the insights of teachers about coaching since they are the recipients of coach services and in the best position to assess their impact on student learning. 180 teachers responded to the teacher survey *(Appendix D)* on coaching from the K-8 schools. The findings that follow are primarily from the survey data and are central to improving coach services and instructional capacity building in CPS.

Teachers Seek More Agency

When asked how the coaching program could be improved, teachers recognized the power of goal setting for themselves and their colleagues. From their perspective, goal-setting processes are the implicit vehicles for teacher agency and teacher leadership, and they want to be more involved in setting the broad expectations of their work.

> *Teacher Agency Quotes: Professional Goals*
> - Coaches should work on grade level teams on goals and ideas chosen by those grade level teachers.

- Allow teachers to be part of the planning at the beginning of the year regarding "what support do I need, how often, what would the support look like? For example, modeling lessons, interpreting Common Core standards, differentiating lessons."

- Define and establish the purpose of academic coaching at our school. Each person being coached should develop a brief plan with two or three goals for the year: What does the individual want to learn and what would push their practice? Common planning time should include cross grade level time—for example, all ELA teachers should be able to meet during school hours once per week.

These teacher responses show the desire for more teacher agency and meaningful teacher leadership. These responses are aligned with our observations of teachers in team meetings or in the classroom where there is a clear pattern of teachers first seeking agency to shape coaching to their professional needs, and then focusing on student needs only after professional needs were met. In one team meeting, a group of grade level teachers gathered and each recommended a different approach to a lesson design activity. There was no effort to reach consensus and there was no mention of how student data might drive their design decisions. The team departed with each teacher planning to teach the lesson according to his or her preferred method. There was no plan to report back to team colleagues how each lesson went.

In our interviews, coaches repeatedly expressed the belief that it is the quality of the teacher and the act of teaching that make all the difference in student learning outcomes, and teachers agreed, "Some coaches in the past have helped me enormously - by helping me become more expert in teaching methods. It is the teaching that makes a difference in what students learn." While this is a statement that is perceived to be universally true, one could qualify it by examining types of strategies that teachers use in particular situations with particular students that make all the difference in outcomes.[38]

Improving Agency

Teachers appreciate coaching and many see a strong connection between coaching and gains in student achievement. Most teachers who responded to the survey believe that the primary purpose of coaching is to raise student achievement. But to deliver improved outcomes, they seek more say in coaching endeavors rather than more student-focused methods and data centered habits.

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[38] Boudett, City and Murname. (2013) *Data Wise,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

To raise teacher and coach agency, teachers suggested that they be invited to collaborate with their coach on the following topics:

- Establishing their collaborative and individual learning goals for the year

- Setting 100% of the PD menu of offerings at the school level

- Deciding which pedagogical methods they want to focus on during the current school year.

- Deciding what new initiatives do they want to learn about

- Identifying resources available for sharing across schools and clusters.

Teachers constitute the coach's class. Coaches can differentiate across teachers based on teacher expertise and desire to build their teaching repertoire. Time and scheduling as well as the principal's instructional leadership role all contribute to teacher agency; they have also been addressed previously.

If coaches are more responsive to student driven teacher leadership needs, coaches themselves will have more coach agency over the work, because it is reciprocal and therefore more highly leveraged towards student results.

A Shift in Teacher Views of Coaching Capacity

Teachers Value Coaching

It is evident that what builds capacity are spaces where teachers and coaches feel open to share, learn, challenge, fail, innovate and succeed both individually and collectively. Although the accountability era promotes data-centered habits, the practices that inspire teachers are those that go beyond student achievement test scores, focus on pedagogy and instructional practices that enrich teachers and students alike while reinforcing a system of support. The best systems are those that balance both authentic pedagogy and data driven practices. CPS is in the enviable position to embrace both these capacity levers. CPS can become a systemic environment where teachers can collectively engage in this blended capacity building and their coaches become their best guides through this process.

Primary Purposes of Coaching

The teachers' perspective reflected a good degree of agreement about why they value coaching and what makes a difference in their practice. Teachers see the top three purposes of coaching as: *improving student achievement, engaging in collaborative practice and improving lesson design.*

It is important to note that teachers who have been with the district eight years or more are not as likely to rate collaboration as important as younger teachers. These experienced teachers have experienced primarily the one on one format for coaching and may value team collaboration less than their younger peers. These bifurcated priorities are consistent with the CPS culture that championed teacher and coach professional development as the best way to improve student achievement, as opposed to a focus on diagnosing and meeting student needs. When lacking a detailed focus on student needs as a basis for lesson design, good professional development alone doesn't yield the desired student results.

Purpose of Coaching	% Ranked Top Purpose	% Ranked Second Purpose	% Ranked 3rd Purpose
Build content expertise through Common Core Standards	7%	12%	13%
Improve student achievement	35%	22%	15%
Engage in collaborative practice	24%	20%	13%
Improve data-driven teaching practice	10%	13%	17%
Provide intervention for struggling students	11%	12%	10%
Improve lesson design	7%	12%	20%
Develop new teachers	5%	8%	8%
Establish norms for student work	1%	1%	5%

Figure 11: Teacher Survey: Purpose of Coaching

Teachers Value School Based Support

Teacher agency was limited by some perceptions coaches have about the value of district vs. school initiatives, according to one teacher, "Coaching would improve if it occurred as a response to particular supports that teachers need and request. I've found the more time and energy coaches spend on implementing district initiatives, the less connected they are to what is going on in classrooms and what teachers are struggling with, which makes them less effective coaches. Teachers will be given opportunities to directly watch lessons presented by a coach to the students in different subject areas."

Build Collaborative Structures

Teachers and coaches seem to understand that building instructional capacity necessitates strong collaborations. We know from Anderson's work[39] and the interviews we conducted with central staff and

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[39] Anderson, S. E. (2013). The Enduring Challenge of Achieving Effective Teaching on a Large Scale. *Leading Educational Change: Global Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform, 4*2.

school coaches that CPS is ready to step away from their separate implementation approach of coaching programs and embrace the more systemic PLC approach. System-wide change is more likely attained through the PLC, due to its inherent design to support collegial learning and development and its school base close to the students.[40]

The PLC provides a collaborative structure that changes the context of school coaching and makes it less siloed and more systemic. According to recent empirical studies, well-developed PLCs have had a positive impact on both teaching practice and student achievement.[41] Collaborative participation by coaches and teachers in their redefined reciprocal roles should build instructional capacity faster than any other measure.

PLC's are not firmly in place now since less than half of the schools have invested in this structure; many have opted for a compliance driven ILT in lieu of the more complex PLC structure. The role of the coach in the PLC's is not defined. A strong principal with a high degree of instructional knowledge facilitates most PLC's. Our best examples have coaches working with their principals on their PLC to seek consensus around key instructional issues that benefit students.

On a larger scale, the district needs to declare the common instructional needs across all schools. This action will maximize the collaborative sharing of best practice for this district at this time with these students and teachers. Only then can grounded instructional capacity be built for the future. One central administrator succinctly urged, "We need to backtrack and ask, "What do we want to achieve with coaching and what are our desired outcomes now?'"

Balance Capacity and Student Centered-Accountability

In addition, we know from Elmore's work[42] that we need to balance the new external data accountability requirements of the past few years with an equally robust, internal instructional capacity to assure authentic, systemic work that is built to last. Our baseline CPS data suggests that neither strong accountability nor strong instructional capacity building is currently in place.

The original purpose of the coaching system was to build instructional capacity amongst new teachers and to grow content knowledge to develop all teachers. From these earliest origins, building the instructional capacity of coaches was highly focused on their professional development and less focused

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[40] Vescio, *op cit*.

[41] Hargreaves, A. & Fullen, M. & (2012). *Professional Culture and Communities*. In Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school (pp. 103-147). New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

[42] Elmore, *op cit*.

on student results. The external accountability pressures came as an unwelcome demand, since CPS staff believed that professionally developed coaches and teachers would result in improved student achievement. Data driven lessons combined with differentiated teaching are not the norm; instead we see much time and resource spent on some of the latest teaching and learning strategies but not organized to deliver differentially. As a result, learning gaps occur and student mastery of key standards is not always achieved. A blend of both approaches is what is called for now.

It is worth noting that over the past 6 years CPS became layered with a lack of fidelity to the original professional development coaching models because of variable funding/staffing decisions and a confounding of the coaching implementations with central, state and federal accountability directives. The CPS district is a layered program implementation lacking a coherent focus on student results and this causes confusion about school-based priorities and commitments.

Given these findings, many of the recommendations in this report are structured to balance instructional capacities with external accountabilities of student data:

- The team meetings facilitated by coaches in every school need to be data driven and their lessons are differentiated to ensure that more students meet mastery.

- Interventionists are skilled diagnosticians and can augment the work of teams by assuring more appropriate instruction to groups of students or individuals, both in the classroom and in pull out structures.

- The pedagogic coach role draws from a set of high leverage teaching methods that will maximize the academic growth of students because it focuses on what they know and what they need to know.

Support Authentic Teaching Teams

The authentic teaching and learning that CPS started coaching with is still their most valuable asset but an emphasis on data-driven student results is lacking. Authentic learning requires focused teaching, i.e., effective instructional practices are nurtured primarily through data driven collaborative efforts that emphasize continuous improvement and refinement, such as the PLC's. The team structures are a great way to achieve this responsive vision within a school—this sort of work necessitates a team with a common set of priorities focused on collective inquiry, critical problem analysis and innovative solution generation with clearly defined desired outcomes.

Coach Capacity Improvement Strategies

2. *Build collaborative structures such as PLC's to hold the instructional decisions and priorities at the school level.*

   Balance the accountability requirements with instructional capacity building strategies and training: data-driven team meetings, interventionists and conditions that support school ownership.

   Support teaching teams focused on delivering authentic teaching and learning, part of the CPS tradition.

Blended Capacity

When asked to choose the top coaching practices that improve student outcomes, teachers departed from their long held beliefs about professional development outcomes for coaching, and they focused on student data and differentiation practices:

- *Examining student data as a team*

- *Designing differentiated lessons that respond to diverse student data*

- *Designing curricular units by grade level*

- *Making team decisions about the best method to teach (Common Core, etc.)*

When combined with their strong response to choosing their most valued training (Figure 12) as "student differentiation" we see that teachers in CPS are realigning themselves with a blended approach to raising student achievement.

The teachers give high ratings (83%) to their coaches' skills/ability to achieve the three purposes of coaching: *improving student achievement, engaging in collaborative practice and improving lesson design.* 63% added that their instruction would be improved if they could spend more time with their coach, and 68% noted that they have achieved a better understanding of Common Core through their coach.[43]

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[43] See Appendix D. Teacher Survey results experienced a natural positive bias because teachers who chose to fill it out tended to be enthusiastic.

What training have you received (from CPS or your school) that has been most valuable to improving your teaching? (Choose top 2)		
Training	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Student data analysis	8	7%
Constructing formative assessments	18	16%
Looking at student work	8	7%
Problem solving team protocols	5	4%
Student differentiation	31	27%
Common Core curriculum	17	15%
Lessons design and delivery	18	16%
Making consensus decisions	2	2%
Classroom modeling	6	5%

Figure 12: Teacher Survey: Most Valuable Training

Coaching Results

Probably the most revealing findings from the teacher survey centered on the types of evidence teachers cite to prove that instructional coaching results in improved student academic outcomes. Many of these comments prioritized teaching and assessment practices as the primary levers of positive results. Some are based on hard data, some on teacher observations and some on teacher experience. As a whole they are compelling and illuminating, because we can see teacher recognition of student needs as the primary driver of the coaching work, so it is worth citing a few here:

Teacher Survey Quotes

- *Student scores have gone up as a group and more struggling students are progressing and meeting the benchmarks.*

- *Work accomplished by my students tied to specific lessons and sets of lessons show evidence of improved academic outcomes. Student growth measured between pre and post assessments also show these results.*

- *MCAS scores steadily increasing, more students on grade level. My students have shown growth from me taking advice from my coach.*

- *Our school's MCAS scores increased greatly last year as a direct result of the work the teachers and coaches did together last year. We now teach differently.*

- *MCAS results of my third grade students, reading benchmarks, writing protocol scores, and periodic district math assessments, end of unit assessments, and district assessments show more students meeting benchmarks.*

What evidence do you have to show that the instructional coaching program results in improved student academic outcomes in your classroom?		
Impact Level	**Frequency**	**Percent**
No evidence of positive impact	25	21%
Evidence limited to positive formative impact after a few lessons	33	28%
Evidence limited to positive formative impact after many lessons	26	22%
Evidence of positive summative impact on annual results	35	29%

Figure 13: Teacher Survey: Coaching Improves Achievement

Altogether, 79% of teachers gauged positive impact of coaching on student outcomes, ranging from limited formative impact to significant annual summative impact. 21% saw no evidence of positive impact (Figure 13).

Teachers who have been involved in the coaching program for 5 – 8 years showed the most hopeful results for this question. 43% of this subgroup report evidence of positive summative impact. The same is true for 27% of teachers with 1 – 2 years involvement in coaching, for 28% of teachers with 2 – 5 years involvement in coaching, and 11% of teachers with more than 8 years involvement in coaching.

Coach Professional Growth Findings

Effective Coach Training Needed

Many of the interviewed coaches felt that they were offered intense training in district-sponsored initiatives but very little training in how to be an effective coach. New coaches bemoaned their lack of role-specific training and experienced coaches yearned for ways to share best practices within and between schools. Some coaches wondered how to assure their own professional growth in this demanding, ever-changing role.

The debate between coaching heavy and light can be resolved by a gradual release of autonomy when a teacher is moving positively on a coaching continuum. Coaches need to be trained developmentally in assessing 'what is needed when' by teachers on their staff. One principal elaborated, "I would like to offer teachers choice about how they would like to be coached and what they need when, but [they

must do it] by staying within the parameters of the school needs as defined by the School Improvement Plan."

Differentiated Coach Goals Needed

Coaches will be more focused about their own growth if they set annual goals for themselves and work with their teachers to set coaching goals with them. One coach suggested that they provide more customization to teacher needs, "We could develop something more differentiated for teachers. What aspect of your practice do you want to improve? Let us support you in that area for a whole year! What areas have your students excelled in—then perhaps you should focus on another area for a while. No more one size fits all."

Lack of Differentiated Lessons

While teachers are highly encouraged to design creative lessons using student data and standards driving their instruction, many of the lessons we observed were lacking evidence of data driven differentiation. It was not unusual to observe a planning or debrief conversation without any mention of student data groupings or differentiation.

One Upper School Principal offered this organizational insight, "When we did the reorganization, we set up the structures to ensure equity, but we didn't follow through with the tools to really address differentiation." And a central office administrator agreed, "My worry is that we will have a lot of students in tier two without ever giving them differentiated core instruction. They will get leapt to the highest level of intervention, and that is a bit unfair. We haven't really been thoughtful about how to really support teachers with differentiation strategies or what it looks like."

Coach Professional Growth Recommendations

1. *Train coaches on expectations of coach effectiveness, i.e., differentiated lessons*

2. *Set transparent annual coach goals aligned with school goals*

Explanation:

1. *Training in coach system methods*: Coaches need more training in common topics that will allow them to become strong, performance oriented coaches. Common coach needs are granular data analysis, pedagogy methods and differentiated lesson design and delivery. To assure that coaching operates as a system, coaches need additional training in data and curriculum online retrieval and intervention diagnoses, always in service of their CPT team efforts sand linked to district support services through the coordinators.

2. *Transparent annual coach goals*: School coaches should set annual professional goals with their principal and share them transparently with their teachers. School coaches need more training on how to be a good coach, and collaborating about how to deliver the norms of coaching practice commonly ascribed to in CPS.

Coach Evaluation Findings

Competing and Alternating Supervision and Evaluation Processes

Currently, the role of supervising school coaches is shared with coordinators over an alternating three-year process, which has resulted in competing reporting relationships between principals and the district coordinators. The rationale has been that the coordinator has the expert content knowledge while the principal has the daily observational access to all coaching interactions in the school.

One central administrator explained why a shared evaluation role has not been working, "We have put the structure in place for all of our principals and coordinators to be together but I don't think we have figured out an effective way to have the conversation. Principals and coordinators need to get together around common practices, evaluation and instruction." In addition to these communication problems, many of the principals felt they should have full supervision responsibilities for any coaches in their building since "double reporting" is confusing and disempowering for the school and staff. As explained by one principal, "I am grateful for these two full time positions at my school. I am thrilled that the district pays for them, but they come with constraints ion the ways that I can allocate the resource of those coaches. I guess I would love to be trusted with the authority to make that decision myself."

Unclear Performance Expectations

The principal and coordinator don't hold the same criteria for the performance of the school coach, particularly since this evaluation occurs over a three-year period and they each are being asked to look at different aspects of coaching. There is little practical agreement about the current coach job description; coordinators of ELA and Math each issued one separately and Human Resources has yet another one. However, when we asked principals and coaches in the field if they understood the role of the school coach, the majority said that they had never seen nor been briefed on the coach job description and they wished the district would clarify the performance expectations.

Certification Mismatches

There is evidence of at least a few district and school coaches not certified in areas they are leading. One central administrator noted that the district's restructuring had shifted coaches from middle schools to primary grades. "As a result of the innovation agenda, some of the coaches who are in our elementary schools right now in the past have probably had more middle school experience. So that has been a transition for some of our coaches, particularly in ELA to really learn that K -2 and 3-5, the primaries…it's very, very different." When we spoke to these coaches, they too acknowledged that it is difficult for them to gain credibility for their coaching work with early grade teachers when they are certified and experienced at the middle school level.

Formal evaluation is not based on clear criteria according to one principal, "There is not right now a clear evaluation process for coaches, so we don't have a set of standards by which they are evaluated. Right now we use the teacher evaluation rubric, which isn't a one to one match. So there needs to be some set of standards to use for evaluating them so they know what their job is."

Coach Evaluation Recommendations

1. *Require annual professional coach goals aligned to school goals*

2. *Make principal primary evaluator to ensure accountability*

3. *Ensure best certification match for assignments*

4. *Conduct new teacher orientations that support coaching*

Explanation:

1. Shared Evaluation Process: One way to improve the shared evaluation process would be to reach agreement with the school coach on a set of annual professional goals aligned with school improvement goals with input from the coordinators who could be tapped by the principal. These goals would then become the basis of the principal evaluation, along with daily performance expectations. In this scenario, the principal can become the primary evaluator since the professional goals establish the criteria. The coordinator's role would change from partial supervisory to expert resource to the principal and the school.

Principal Evaluator and Joint Accountability. The school coach needs to report to the principal to assure coach and principal accountability at the school level. This joint accountability is missing now and it results in a lack of ownership and leadership throughout the loosely structured system. If coaches are to make a difference in the achievement of the students they serve, they need one common pedagogical job description, one principal supervisor and one set of customized professional goals aligned with school goals to assess their progress and growth. Both common and customized practices of school coaches could be reviewed and reinforced during goal setting /goal progress conversations with the principal on an annual basis.

Certification Qualifications. When the new coach job description is revised, and the number and type of coach positions decided, the job description can be posted and all coaches asked to reapply, verifying that they meet the certification and training qualifications and that they are the best match to the new loose/tight pedagogic job description. Principals should make the final hiring selection with the curriculum coordinator serving on the hiring team giving valued input.

New Teacher Orientation: To help assure teacher collaboration and ownership of the coaching agenda, it should be shared in new teacher interviews. As one elementary principal asserted, "I only hire teachers interested in coaching." The CPS New Teacher Induction Model is under revision and the principal and school coach should reinforce its recommendations with new hires also.

SYSTEMIC CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations for Increasing Impact on Teaching and Learning

In light of the findings from the baseline data collected and analyzed, what strategies might the CPS implement to increase the impact of its instructional coaching model on teaching and learning?

This section offers practical implementation and rationale strategies to assure a systemic result and to assure understanding of the respective audiences of coaching in CPS.

There are some overarching implications that affect our interpretations of baseline data and that inform our recommended strategies:

- Early emphasis on content came partially as a result of no adopted curriculum; now with online curriculum eminent, a switch to pedagogic focus is justified.

- Early emphasis on professional development as the primary purpose of coaching had a formative effect on coach priorities: training teachers in content methods trumped data driven habits until recently as teachers are now urging a more student centric focus on differentiation methods.

- Proportionately, very little team coaching is happening now, particularly in Upper Schools, but has it has highest potential for positive impact on teaching and learning.

- One on one classroom coaching is labor intensive and results in low levels of teacher access annually; this decreases the potential positive effects.

- Recent call for differentiation training shows change of teaching culture towards both authentic teaching strategies and data driven habits focused on student needs, the best of both worlds.

Recommendation Summary

This report results in five primary recommendations for increasing the impact of coaching on teaching and learning. The primary shifts embedded in these recommendations are:

1. Shift the number of school coach positions and purpose:

    o Provide one pedagogic coach in lieu of two content coaches per elementary and upper school; focus on differentiation strategies.

- o Provide a new pedagogic job description and have all coaches reapply; increase team time, decrease one on ones but use as formative feedback to team rather than the individual teacher; transfer intervention to interventionist on team

- o Study and learn from the high school facilitated learning pilot in lieu of their content coaching program for the 2014-15 school year.

2. Shift the intervention model:

- o From direct coach delivery to one interventionist position per school as active participant in team meetings

3. Define the principal role:

- o Prioritize team meetings by grade level or content area in the school schedule; strive for one meeting per week per teacher.

- o Principal as sole supervisor of coaches

- o Shift from ILT leader to PLC leader

- o Coach and principal align to achieve school goals

4. Eliminate and redesign central coach support positions:

- o Eliminate all district coach positions

- o Redesign coordinator positions as resource linkage between school coaches and district sources of:

  - ▪ Curriculum resources

  - ▪ Intervention and diagnosis protocols

  - ▪ Customized data by classroom

  - ▪ Video strategies to build shared pedagogical knowledge

5. Shift the nature of district support:

- o From broad district goals to performance outcomes aligned with school improvement goals

- o From numerous organization meetings to one monthly meeting of principals, coaches and coordinators, including OSS reps.

- o From central instigator of live trainings to provider of just-in-time online resources.

- o From separate district PD efforts to one coordinated calendar driven by district goals and funding capacity

- o Reinforce the school feeder pattern as a cohort training and coordinating structure for coaching exchanges of practical knowledge. This structure will strengthen sharing, problem solving and personal knowledge of students, teachers and parents.

Conclusion:

The current CPS coaching program is an accumulation of many smart, well-intentioned purposes lacking a systemic structure that reinforces connections between them. Hence, the district's significant effort, talent and resources are not producing the desired results, particularly for the lower third of the students. The recommendations in this report proactively address what is needed to convert these separate distillations into a coherent and efficient system that produces high impact outcomes for all students. Because these recommendations are systemic, they should be implemented as simultaneously as possible to avoid unintended consequences of incremental change.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CRLS PILOT

(A Facilitative Leadership Option in Lieu of Coaching)

In January 2014 Principal Damon Smith proposed a pilot program at CRLS. He was given permission by CPS Leadership Team to implement this program in Fall of SY 14-15. In March he distributed a letter of information to all instructional staff and conducted a faculty meeting to brief everyone. *His letter to faculty and meeting exit ticket are attached.*

Pilot Summary:

Principal Smith proposed a series of facilitated learning groups to be conducted after school focused on four student-centric goals:

3. *Help students become better readers/writers, speakers and interpreters of text*

4. *Integrate the use of technology into all aspects of the classroom experience*

5. *Communicate high expectations to all students while meeting the needs of the diverse learners in each class*

6. *Enable students to demonstrate their understanding through a variety of methods*

> He envisions staff members sharing best practices, learning new strategies, discussing and sharing ideas to augment student learning. This work would take the place of content coaching now delivered by seven coaches. The one-on-one coached sessions were reaching very few teachers with a single content coach per discipline in this large high school of 221 staff. Smith wants to reach more teachers and wants to foster collaboration that will strengthen student learning, specifically in the four areas he identified, based on recent student performance data.

> He communicated individually with the seven content coaches about this work. They would lose their coaching stipend but could gain a similar stipend for facilitating the groups of teachers meeting after school, should they choose to participate.

> As a result, seven content coaching positions have been eliminated in the 2015 budget; these coaches may continue on teacher lines and they have the option of assisting with the facilitative leadership options remunerated by after-school stipends during the 2015 pilot.

THE CAMBRIDGE RINDGE AND LATIN SCHOOL

Opportunity • Diversity • Respect

March 17, 2014

Good Evening Everyone,

Although there is still significant time remaining in this school year, I wanted to inform you about plans for whole school professional development next year and seek your input on elements of the plan.

From the classes I attend, and the staff I talk with, I know our staff works extremely hard to build, promote and support student learning. I am grateful to work with educators who are focused on helping young people achieve. Recognizing your tremendous effort, but realizing what else needs to be done, has led me to believe we will most enhance student achievement when we collectively develop and consistently utilize practices that:

1) Help students become better readers/ interpreters of text, writers and speakers.

2) Integrate the use of technology into all aspects of the classroom experience.

3) Communicate high expectations to all students while meeting the needs of the diverse learners in each class.

4) Enable students to demonstrate their understanding through a variety of methods.

In order to do this, next year during designated after school meetings, CRLS staff will engage in facilitated learning groups on the four items mentioned above. In facilitated learning groups, staff members will share best practices, learn new strategies, discuss and share ideas to augment student learning and comprehension. I am hopeful that by creating these learning experiences for staff, we will create supportive professional groups, develop capacity and consistency across departments, and maintain a focus on instructional practice school wide. I am excited about this opportunity for whole school learning and I have begun to identify resources that can suppot this initiative.

Before February break, I communicated individually with all CRLS Instructional Support Coaches about this work. I indicated that to support this initiative next year, I would be shifting the focus of the coaching program from providing individual and small group instructional support during the school day, to leadership and facilitation of the learning experiences during after school meetings. I invited each Instructional Support Coach to help develop and lead the after school learning experiences, and I await word from each Coach about their decision to participate in this new phase of work.

To keep these after school meeting groups to a manageable size, an additional set of leaders are needed to facilitate learning groups. With 208 staff members, I am hoping to create learning groups of 21 or fewer with 2 facilitators for each group. I know there is tremendous capacity within our school and many of you have practices and methods in the 4 areas listed above that could/ should be replicated by our staff. If you are interested in potentially being a small group learning experience leader, please let me know. Additionally, if you have ideas or thoughts on any of the four listed topics please communicate with your Dean of Curriculum or the Faculty

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INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING REPORT: A RESPONSE TO CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS RFP   81

THE CAMBRIDGE RINDGE AND LATIN SCHOOL

Opportunity • Diversity • Respect

Advisory Council representative in your department. On Tuesday 3/18, Faculty Advisory Council representatives will briefly discuss this opportunity in your department meetings and they will survey initial ideas/ questions that you may have on these topics.

There are still many elements of this plan to work out before we implement the small group learning experiences as a part of the after school meetings in the Fall of SY 14-15. I will update you as things develop but I also wanted to communicate about the opportunity at the outset to help devise and shape the program for next year. Thanks for all that you do for our students and colleagues.

Sincerely,

Damon

March 18 Department Meeting Exit Ticket

As you know, Damon has identified the following priorities for professional development in the 2014-2015:

7. *Help students become better readers/ interpreters of text, writers and speakers.*

8. *Integrate the use of technology into all aspects of the classroom experience.*

9. *Communicate high expectations to all students while meeting the needs of the diverse learners in each class.*

10. *Enable students to demonstrate their understanding through a variety of methods.*

Please rank the professional development strands above based on greatest to least need **for your own** professional development.

Greatest   _____   _____   _____   _____   Least

Please rank the professional development strands above based on which you think would have the greatest to least impact on student learning at CRLS.

Greatest   _____   _____   _____   _____   Least

Please share any thoughts, resource ideas, or suggestions about any of the four professional development strands ·listed above.

If you personally have resources related to the professional development strands or if you are interested in being a small group learning experience leader, please comment below.

APPENDIX B:
COACH JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Suggested CPS Pedagogic Coach
Job Description

Common Responsibilities of the School Coach: (TIGHT, i.e., for every coach)

The goal is to develop teacher leaders throughout the system capable of leading grade and content are teams within schools. Hence, the common coaching actions required of all coaches will focus on scaffolding teachers into leading other groups of teachers in:

1. *Analyzing data and student work with colleagues to plan instruction that gets results*

2. *Being an effective facilitator and leader of teams*

3. *Facilitating live classroom teaching for observation, feedback and team sharing*

4. *Modeling being a focused change agent in an existing community of teachers and students*

In addition to supporting the school based teachers, School Coaches will also have the opportunity to collaborate across their cluster of schools, develop cross school professional development (where appropriate) and to share and learn from each other about coaching and reform implementation techniques that are working in each of the schools. Sharing and learning and will work to develop common curriculum around leadership development and inquiry processes using data and student work.

Common Coaching Duties Customized to School Needs: (LOOSE, i.e., Discretion to customize to local school needs and priorities, but Principal and coach held accountable for results)

The Principal and Instructional Coach will lead the PLC in the development of a shared vision through the creation of school goals and expected outcomes based on the most recent student performance data. Then the Principal and coach will create a set of annual performance goals for the coach aligned to the school goals. They will customize the common coach responsibilities into a detailed schedule and plan that will result in achieving their school instructional goals. Principals are held accountable for achieving school goals through the customized coach plan and other preferred principal strategies for scheduling, training and modeling.

a. Teaching teachers to analyze data and student work with colleagues to plan instruction that gets results In Common Planning Time and Professional Development time, train and support teacher teams to use data-based inquiry cycles to identify high-leverage skill gaps, design common lessons and common assessments, assess the effects of their efforts, and recommend changes to grade-or school-level policies/practices to better prevent and respond to students' struggles.

b. Work with teacher teams to develop common lists of skills/objectives to be mastered in each unit, and to develop regular and systematic process for both teachers and students to track progress on those skills (incorporating data about performance, reflection on causes of success/weakness, and action steps to improve).

c. Monitor teams' inquiry, ensuring that they document their inquiry in a consistent manner, create differentiated approaches for different student needs, and can explain and self-assess the quality of their instructional decision-making e.g., what data they analyzed, what they inferred from it, what actions they took, and what effects resulted.

d. Plan instruction with grade /content teams by accessing Common Core Standards, UbD curricula, and interventionist strategies. Assure that each team receives frequent updates to their summative and formative data and that it is organized for each teacher by individual classes taught.

C. Teaching teachers to learn to be an effective facilitator and leader of teams

a. Serve with teachers on the grade and subject CPT Teams, data team and School PLC, co-planning with facilitators and monitoring to ensure evidence-based decision-making. Assure that there is a clear agenda with desired outcomes stated, and that protocols are introduced to share and solve problems and generate innovative solutions.

b. Facilitate up-front and on-going development of teams to ensure conditions necessary for teams to do effective work: trust, strategies for provoking and managing productive conflict, commitment to shared goals, and accountability to each other and clear responsibility for targeted goals.

c. Develop and deliver training to build teachers' capacity to lead evidence-based improvement. Specifically, train, support, and monitor designated teachers to:

facilitate grade-level team meetings, establish norms / expectations, ensure evidence-based decision-making, document the progress of the team, lead inquiry/data analysis, "push from alongside," conduct peer-coaching sessions and record them as learning tools for the (video, written low inference notes, verbal reporting).

    d. Train teachers to analyze the evidence of the effects of their teaching, problem-solve, and conduct peer-observations/peer-coaching to support one another in implementing best practice instructional techniques.

D. Facilitate live classroom teaching for observation, feedback and team sharing.

    a. Co-plan, co-teach and document select one-on-ones and peer coaching episodes as lessons to be shared with teams for feedback, collaboration and growth.

    b. Set local criteria for selecting teachers for one-on-ones to be shared as learning models for CPT teams

    c. Facilitate peer-coaching options by matching peers appropriately through locally established criteria

E. Teaching teachers to learn to be a change agent in an existing community.

    a. Provide teachers with models of proven instructional practice and lessons learned working in an existing school community.

    b. Provide feedback and serve as a critical friend on teacher interactions with other staff and community members.

CURRENT CPS COACH JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Building Math Coach Responsibilities (Elementary School and Upper Campus Coaches)

- Reports to the District Math Coordinator
- Work collaboratively with teachers to provide instructional support and pedagogical content knowledge for mathematics teaching and learning in Jr. K – 5th grade or 6th – 8th grade classrooms. Coaches will include special educators in collaboration meetings and in individual coaching opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with district math coaches in supporting their school's teachers
- Work collaboratively with the school administration to meet the school's instructional goals. Coaches will do 4 instructional observations over the year (2 with the school principal and 2 with the school assistant principal) to focus on math instruction. These observations will not be evaluative, but will help facilitate discussion about math instruction in the school.
- Facilitate the use of data to inform math instruction and improve student achievement by supporting the use of technology to collect and disseminate that data. For example, Coaches may use the item analysis of a district assessment to drive discussions during team meetings. School-wide data dashboards can support student review meetings, RTI instructional decisions as well as school improvement plans.
- Facilitate school-based mathematics workshops that include the most recent research on best practices, curriculum, and assessments.
- Develop, maintain, and nurture a Math Leadership Team (MLT), or other structure, that involves teachers in guiding school-wide math instruction
- Support math leadership in the building by encouraging teachers to participate in math leadership opportunities within the school and the district, and collaborate with district coaches to develop Aspiring Leaders as leaders
- Participate in district-wide mathematics workshops and meetings
- Participate in the school leadership team and develop the school improvement plan
- Support district wide projects and efforts
- To foster family engagement in the mathematics program, coaches will plan 2 annual events that meet the needs of the school community.
- Support the authentic implementation of comprehensive district-wide, standards-based curricula and assessments.
- Participate in monthly 6-hour building coach meetings.
- Represent the Mathematics Department in a variety of forums as requested by schools and/or the Mathematics Coordinator.
- Coaches will be asked to define a problem of practice that guides their work. Their problem of practice will focus on the school's and principal's problem of practice.
- Coaches will define goals and an action plan for those goals. All goals will be related to their problem of practice.

_____

Building Literacy Coach Job Description

Duties: *The Building Literacy Coach* is an instructional leader who is responsible for coaching teachers and providing professional development to support the implementation of Cambridge Public School's ELA curriculum, Literacy Framework and Assessment System. The Building Literacy Coach is directly responsible to the K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator.

Other responsibilities include:
- Support the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI)

- Analyze and utilize data to monitor student progress and to coordinate instruction.
- Oversee and organize assessment training for teachers, assessment scheduling, implementation and reporting.
- Participate in school leadership teams (instructional leadership team, literacy leadership team, PLCs).
- Meet regularly with building administration to establish and maintain a shared vision for coaching, collaboration and implementation of the literacy framework.
- Attend and participate actively in professional development sessions provided by the English Language Arts Department, Lesley University and other organizations.*
- Receive coaching and support visits from District Coaches.
- Participate in on-going professional training sponsored by CPS, Lesley University and other organizations.
- Actively participate in curriculum development and alignment.
- Consult and collaborate with Special Education staff and specialists around differentiated instruction, modifications and alternative assessment.
- Guide the purchasing, distribution, organization and use of books and materials for classrooms and professional development.
- Assist in the creation of a home-school literacy program.
- Provide resources to parents to help them understand how to support their students at home.
- Produce a yearly school report for the ELA Department.

Minimum Requirements:
- Knowledge of Response to Intervention Implementation
- Education: Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university; **Master's degree preferred**.
- Massachusetts Teacher Certification/Licensure. Meet NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements.
- At least five years successful teaching experience.
- Proven leadership capacity and ability to work cooperatively with staff and parents.
- Literacy Collaborative coach training or willing to train.*

*Individuals may be required to attend coaching training provided by the district trainer, if appropriate.

Upper School Literacy Coach/Interventionist Job Description
Duties: *The Upper School Literacy Coach* is an instructional leader who is responsible for coaching teachers and providing professional development to support the implementation of Cambridge Public School's English Language Arts Curriculum, Literacy Framework and Assessment System. The literacy coach will also provide intervention to students who are struggling to achieve. The Upper School Literacy Coach reports directly to the K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator.

Other responsibilities include:
- Meet regularly with building administration to establish and maintain a shared vision for coaching, collaboration and implementation of the curriculum and literacy framework.
- Participate in school leadership teams (instructional leadership team, literacy leadership team, PLCs).
- Analyze and utilize data to monitor student progress and to coordinate instruction.
- Oversee and organize assessment training for teachers, assessment scheduling, implementation and reporting.
- Actively participate in curriculum development and alignment.

- Consult and collaborate with Special Education staff and specialists around differentiated instruction, modifications and alternative assessment.
- Guide the purchasing, distribution, organization and use of books and materials for classrooms and professional development.
- Assist in the creation of a home-school literacy program.
- Provide resources to parents to help them understand how to support their students at home.
- Receive coaching and support visits from a District Coach.
- Attend and participate actively in professional development sessions provided by the English Language Arts Department, Lesley University and other organizations.
- Produce a yearly school report for the ELA Department.

Minimum Requirements:
- Education: Master's degree or higher from an accredited college or university;
- Massachusetts Teacher Certification/Licensure. Meet NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements.
- At least five years successful teaching experience in Middle Grades.
- Proven leadership capacity and ability to work cooperatively with staff and parents.
- Literacy Collaborative coach training or willing to train.

_____

APPENDIX C: DISTRICT REPORTING CHART WITH DETAILED CHANGES

**Cambridge Public Schools
Organizational Chart
SY 2015-16 keep/delete**

Legal Counsel
Maureen

Chief Planning
Officer

Superintendent of Schools
Jeffrey M. Young, Ed.D.

Deputy Superintendent
Carolyn L Turk Ed D

Assistant Superintendent
Student Services
Victoria Greer Ed D

Director
Student Services
Jean Spera

Program Manager OSS
Richard Whitehead

OSS TIC'S/Coordinators
(5

Special Education
Teachers
**19 Intervention specialists
2 per US 1 per Elem
assigned to school coach
teams**

OST Program Manager
Khari Milner

Conflict Mediator
Chandra Banks

Academic Challenge
Program Manager

Assistant Superintendent
Elementary Education
Maryann MacDonald

Upper School Heads and
High School Principals (US)
4 Coaches (US)

Upper School and
High School Assistant
Principals and Deans
(Gr 6-12)

Upper School &
High School Teachers
(Gr 6-12)

Elementary
Principals
11 Coaches

Elementary
Assistant Principals and
School Administration
Managers

Elementary Teachers
(JK-5 and JK-8)

Title I
Mary Grassi

Assistant
Superintendent
Curriculum &

Curriculum
Coordinators
**(Add 2.0 OSS meeting
reps)
17.0 School
Coaches
9.2 District Coaches**

Assessment Specialist
Kathi Ivins

Grants Specialist
Candyce Dostert

**Cambridge Public Schools
Organizational Chart
SY 2015-16 keep/delete**

Executive Director
Human Resources
Barbara J Allen

Manager, HR
Anne Marie Picanco

Affirmative Action/
Recruitment Officer
Kahris McLaughlin

Chief Operating Officer
James P. Maloney

Chief Financial Officer
Claire Spinner

Manager, Payroll
Deborah Nordstrom

Manager,
Purchasing & Accts

Asst. Budget
Director

Chief Information Officer
Steve Smith

Director, Student
Enrollment
Linh O

Director, Safety & Security
John Silva

Director, Facilities
Dana Ham

Director, Food Services
Melissa Honeywood

Transportation Supervisor
Tina Fisher

REPORT/SUPPORT CHART FOR SCHOOL COACHES AND DISTRICT SUPPORT
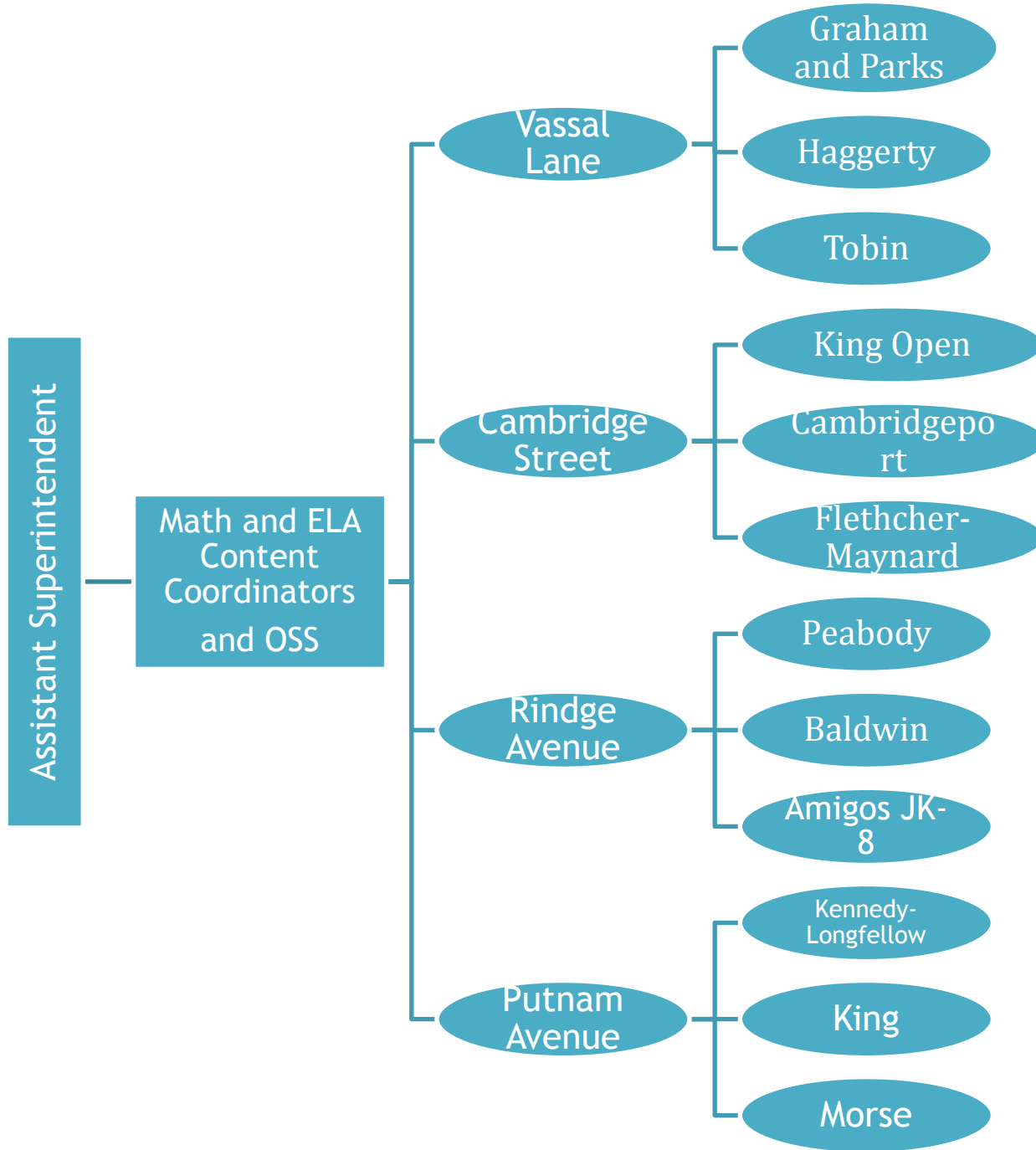
NOTES: Rectangular shapes indicate positions; oval shapes indicate schools. For each school, there will be a principal with a pedagogic coach as direct report.

Math, ELA and OSS Coordinators are the support team for coaching in the schools and they report directly to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Principals request support services for their PLC such as: online content curriculum, customized student data, diagnostic support for interventions and classroom video technical support.

APPENDIX D: TEACHER SURVEY

(180 Respondents)

Question 1: Identify school

School	Frequency	Percent
Amigos	7	6%
Baldwin	10	8%
CSUS	10	8%
Cambridgeport	10	8%
Fletcher Maynard	6	5%
Graham & Parks	10	8%
Haggerty	8	6%
Kennedy-Longfellow	15	12%
King Open	5	4%
MLK	11	9%
Morse	6	5%
PAUS	5	4%
Peabody	6	5%
Tobin	9	7%
VLUS	8	6%

11 teachers from CRLS responded to the survey. They were dropped for this analysis.

Question 2: Identify grade level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent
K	25	21%
1	17	14%
2	9	7%
3	18	15%
4	17	14%
5	13	11%
6	8	7%
7	5	4%
8	9	7%

Kindergarten teachers are the most represented teacher survey respondents.

Question 3: How many years have you been involved in the coaching program at your school?

Years in Coaching Program	Frequency	Percent
1-2 years	38	30%
2-5 years	35	28%
5-8 years	34	27%
8 years +	20	16%

There is a fairly even distribution of teacher respondents' years in coaching program. 16% of the respondents have more than 8 years of experience in the coaching program. None of the respondents with more than 8 years of experience are middle school (grade 6-8) teachers.

Question 4: From the list below, please select the TOP THREE purposes of the coaching effort at your school. Then rank these three 1-3 from the most important (1) to the least important (3).

Purpose of Coaching	% Ranked Top Purpose	% Ranked 2nd Purpose	% Ranked 3rd Purpose
Build content expertise through Common Core Standards	7%	12%	13%
Improve student achievement	35%	22%	15%
Engage in collaborative practice	24%	20%	13%
Improve data-driven teaching practice	10%	13%	17%
Provide intervention for struggling students	11%	12%	10%
Improve lesson design	7%	12%	20%
Develop new teachers	5%	8%	8%
Establish norms for student work	1%	1%	5%

Note: Improving student achievement and engaging in collaborative practice are identified as the top purpose of coaching by nearly 60% of respondents. These answers are also the top choices for the second purpose of coaching. There is a more even distribution for the third choice, with improving lesson design at the highest frequency.

Question 5: Is the current model of instructional coaching at your school achieving these three top ranked purposes?

68% of teacher survey respondents believe that the current model of instructional coaching at their school achieves the top three ranked purposes of coaching, as identified in Question 4.

Teachers with eight or more years of experience in the coaching program were less likely to answer "yes" than teachers with fewer years in the coaching program.

Question 6: Does your coach have adequate skills to achieve these three top purposes?

86% of teachers surveyed believe their coach has adequate skills to achieve the top three ranked purposes of coaching, as identified in Question 4.

Those who answered "yes" to Question 5 also answered "yes" to Question 6 62% of the time. (All other correlations between yes/no answers in Questions 5-8 have weak or moderate correlations).

Question 7: Would your instruction be improved by increased time with your coach?

61% of teacher respondents think that their instruction would be improved by increased time with their coach.

Those with 1 - 5 years of involvement in the coaching program were more likely to think that their instruction would be improved by increased time with their coach (68%), relative to their colleagues with 5+ years of involvement in the coaching program (52%).

Question 8: Do you better understand the requirements of the Common Core standards through working with your instructional coach?

70% of teacher survey respondents say that they better understand the requirements of the Common Core standards through working with their instructional coach.

Question 9: What evidence do you have to show that the instructional coaching program results in improved student academic outcomes in your classroom?

We see an even distribution of impact level among all teacher survey respondents.

Teachers who have been involved in the coaching program for 5 – 8 years show the most hopeful results for this question. 43% of this subgroup report evidence of positive summative impact. The same is true for 27% of teachers with 1 – 2 years involvement in coaching, for 28% of teachers with 2 – 5 years involvement in coaching, and 11% of teachers with more than 8 years involvement in coaching.

Question 10: From the list below, please select the TOP THREE coaching practices that improve student outcomes. Then rank these three 1-3 from the most important (1) to least important (3).

Top coaching practices that improve student outcomes	% Ranked top coaching practice	% Ranked 2nd coaching practice	% Ranked 3rd coaching practice
Making team decisions about the best methods to teach CC content	10%	12%	16%
Sharing classroom management	2%	2%	3%

techniques by grade level			
One-on-one debriefing classroom lessons	6%	12%	10%
Designing curricular units by grade level	13%	7%	11%
Designing differentiated lessons that respond to diverse student data	24%	20%	20%
Examining student data as a grade level team	29%	23%	14%
One-on-one designing and modeling classroom lessons	11%	10%	9%
Setting norms for student work as a grade level team	4%	13%	17%

Designing differentiated lessons that respond to diverse student data and examining student data as a grade level team are the two most consistently ranked top coaching practices. Sharing classroom management techniques by grade level is by far the least chosen option.

Question 11: How much impact do the Common Planning Time meetings have on your teaching practice?

CPT impact on teaching practice	Frequency	Percent
Always impacts my practice	23	19%
Impacts most of my practice	34	29%
Limited impact on certain topics	49	42%
Almost never impacts my practice	12	10%

"Limited impact" is the modal answer to this question. Of the 49 survey respondents who said CPT has a limited impact on their teaching practice, only 7 are 6th – 8th grade teachers; 42 are K -5 teachers.

Question 12: What training have you received (from CPSD or your school) that has been most valuable to improving your teaching? (Choose top 2)

Training	Frequency	Percent
Student data analysis	8	7%
Constructing formative assessments	18	16%
Looking at student work	8	7%
Problem solving team protocols	5	4%
Student differentiation	31	27%
Common Core curriculum	17	15%
Lessons design and delivery	18	16%
Making consensus decisions	2	2%
Classroom modeling	6	5%

- To what extent and in what ways would these strategies require changes in the current coaching model?

- Report on the actual roles and responsibilities in relation to that of the job description of instructional coaches (theory vs. operational) and recommend a proper reporting structure to strengthen effectiveness of service delivery.

OPTION: Reinforce the reorganization:
Organize reporting by elem/MS/HS—possibly 2 clusters at elementary for cross sharing partners, but all could meet together centrally.

1. To what extent and in what ways would these strategies lead to more direct approaches to assessing the outcomes of coaching on the achievement of the district's teaching and learning goals?

   a. Review and evaluate the level of agency coaches feel in their ability to impact teaching and learning at their assigned grade level.

   b. Review and evaluate impact of direct coaching on instruction and student learning.

   c. Provide a report for the Superintendent related to the state of instructional coaching in Cambridge Public Schools.

Retention
Morale
Principal conditions

- Having the opportunity to plan with my coaches provides me with the opportunity to be pro-active about the pacing guides, ensure compliance with common core standards and better meet the needs of my students.

APPENDIX E: FIELD PROTOCOLS

CPSD PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW *Try to schedule this interview first. If this is not possible, start with one of the coaches, then do the principal. Do the observation of teacher/coach last. The teacher survey can be sent out anytime and is dependent on how quickly we can get the e-mail contacts.*

2. Please state your name, school and number of years you have been principal of this school.

3. How many years has the coaching program been in place in this school?

4. Describe the purpose(s) of the coaching program in your school.

    a. Are these purposes related to your school goals? If so, how?

    b. Are these purposed related to district goals? If so, how?

5. What conditions of learning or school context do you consider important to the achievement of your coaching program expectations?

    a. What is your role in creating these conditions?

    b. Do your coaches play a role in creating these conditions?

6. Factually describe the staffing and structure of the current coaching program.

    (If you need to prompt: How many coaches/distribution of coaches/scheduling?)

7. Describe the current roles of your coaches by looking at their schedule. *(i.e., hand them it, can be found in Dropbox files).*

    a. From your perspective, what are the most important duties that they perform?

    b. From your perspective, what are the least important duties they perform?

    c. Does their daily schedule and time allocation adequately reflect your school priorities?

    d. Estimate the percent of their time your current coaches spend on team coaching through the PLC, one-on-one peer or mentor coaching.

8. Describe all the types of training that your coaches currently receive, whether coach related or not.

    a. What types of training are most valuable from your perspective?

        i. What parts of this training are delivered through your funding and planning at the school level?

    ii.   What parts of this training are delivered by central office?

    iii.   Have you elicited feedback from the coaches on the training they find/would find valuable/What kinds of training have coaches said that they find/would find valuable?

9. How much "say" do you have about your coaches and their delivery of services at your school?

    a. Who else, if anyone has say also?

    b. How much say do coaches themselves have?

10. What are the primary instructional needs of the teachers in this school?

    a. How well do the current coaches address those needs? How do you know?

    b. What could be improved?

    c. How do you understand/correlate the instructional needs of teachers to the instructional needs of students?

11. Describe the role of your coaches in conducting the PLC.

- (Prompt: What is the purpose of the PLCs in your building? How are they constructed? What are their structures? Who gets to be in them? Etc.)

    a. How often and for how long does your PLC meet?

    b. Estimate the percent of time spend on coaching activities and describe those activities.

    c. Estimate the percent of time spent on activities other than coaching and then describe those activities.

    d. Describe how the agenda for the PLC is constructed and managed.

12. If you could change anything about the way your coaches' role and delivery is organized, what would those changes be? What changes in staffing or structure have occurred over the recent past? What do you recommend for the future?

13. As principal, if you could change anything about the way you interface with your coaches, what would that be?

CSPD SCHOOL COACH *(Math and Literacy Lead Coach in each school)* INTERVIEW:

14. Please tell me your name, school and number of years that you have been (Math or Literacy) coach at this school.

15. Describe the purpose(s) and expectations of the coaching program in your school.

    a. Are these purposes related to student performance data? If so, how?

    b. Are these purposes related to school and/or district goals? If so, how?

16. What conditions of learning do you consider important to the achievement of your coaching program expectations?

    a. What is your role in creating these conditions?

    b. What role does your principal play a role in creating these conditions?

    c. What role do others play?

17. Describe your current role and how you spend your time (i.e., hand them their schedule).

    a. From your perspective, what are the most important duties that you perform?

    b. From your perspective, what are the least important duties you perform?

    c. Does your daily schedule adequately reflect your school instructional priorities?

    d. Briefly describe your activities and estimate the percent of time you spend on:

        • Team coaching through the PLC

        • One-on-one peer coaching

        • Mentor coaching of new teachers and those seeking assistance

        • Other duties (teaching, administration, etc).

18. Describe all the types of training that you currently receive, whether coach related or not.

    a. What types of training are most valuable from your perspective?

        i. What parts of this training are delivered/organized through your school?

        ii. What parts of this training are delivered/organized by central office?

19. How much "say" do you have about how you spend your time and deliver services at your school?

    a. Who else, if anyone has say also?

20. How effective do your participating teachers find the current coaching program at your school? How many teachers participate and how many do not?

    a. What changes would you make to better address their instructional needs?

    b. Do the instructional needs of the teachers address the primary instructional needs of the students? If so, how?

21. Describe your role in conducting the PLC.

    - (Prompt: What is your primary role (facilitator, discussion director, PD instructor)

    a. How often and for how long does your PLC meet?

    b. Estimate the percent of time spent on coaching activities and describe those activities.

    c. Estimate the percent of time spent on activities other than coaching (teaching, administration, communication, etc.) and then describe those activities.

    d. Describe how the agenda for the PLC is constructed and managed.

    e. How would you improve the work of the PLC?

22. If you could change anything about the way your role and delivery is organized, what would those changes be in prioritized order?

23. As coach, if you could change anything about the way you interface with your principal or central office administrators, what would that be?

CSPD SCHOOL COACH & TEACHER OBSERVATION: *Schedule yourself for a coach/teacher session that takes place in a classroom with students including the debrief following. You can ask questions about the prep session but it is important that you observe active modeling and teaching in a live classroom.*

1. Prior to the observation: Talk with the coach to get the following basic information:

    - What is the coach's relationship with the teacher? How often have they met previously and what are they trying to accomplish?

    - What grade, subject and skill is the teacher prepping/debriefing?

    - Who asked for this session?

    - Is it related to team, peer or mentor formats of coaching?

    - What is the purpose/goals of the one-one one coaching session?

2. During the observation: Take low inference observation notes in one column and

   a. Interpretation and explanation notes in column two. Look for:

- Capture the key dialogue interactions between the coach and the teacher particularly when they focus on improving instruction through active modeling or a debrief.

- How directive or open is the debrief coaching? Capture any aspects of the session that illustrate showing vs. telling.

- What resources or insights are shared?

3. Post observation: Have a brief conversation with the coach:

- Ask the coach to rate the effectiveness of the session, based on his/her goals.

- At what junctures was there a shared understanding?

- Was there a missed opportunity at any juncture?

- What conditions of coaching were or were not in place to support this conversation?

OBSERVATION OF THE Common Planning Time Team: *Observe the CPT teachers at a particular grade level or a multi-grade level CPT. (Note—In some schools the Common Planning Team is called Professional Learning Community (PLC) or Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) or possibly other names.)*

1. Pre-observation: Ask one or both of the coaches the following questions:

- Logistics: How long has the CPT been functioning? How often do they meet? Who sits on the CPT?

- What is the purpose of the CPT in this school? What goals has it set for this year?

- How is the agenda formulated for each meeting? (Collect two agendas as artifacts if possible).

- What role does the coach play? The principal? Other teacher leaders?

2. During the CPT: Take low inference notes in the left column, and then place your interpretations, explanations and questions in the right column. Look fors:

- Who opens the meeting and frames the agenda? Is the leadership stable or rotating?

- What are the purposes of this meeting? Which are most critical? How well are the purposes accomplished? What methods worked/did not work?

- Who gains the floor and why? How are turns worked out?

- How collaborative is the meeting (evidence)?

3. Post-observation: Speak briefly with one or both of the coaches.

- Will the work of this session impact the classroom? Explain how.

- How does the coach assess the effectiveness of the session?

- What is the general plan for PLC's this school year? What key topics will they address in the future?

Central Office Administrator Interview Protocol

1. What is your role and how does it relate to the instructional coaching program?

2. Describe the purpose(s) of the coaching program.

   a. Are these purposes related to school goals? If so, how?

   b. Are the purposes related to student performance data? If so, how?

   c. Are these purposed related to district goals? If so, how?

3. Factually describe the staffing and structure of the current coaching program, as you understand it. What are its strengths and weaknesses given the purpose of the program? What recent changes have occurred and why?

4. What conditions of learning do you consider important to the achievement of school coaching program expectations?

   a. Who has the primary role in creating these conditions?

5. Describe the current roles of the school and district coaches and the coordinators.

   a. From your perspective, what are the most important duties that they perform?

   b. From your perspective, what are the least important duties they perform?

6. Describe all the types of training that the school and district coaches currently receive whether coach related or not.

   a. What types of training are most valuable from your perspective?

      i. What parts of this training are delivered at the school level?

      ii. What parts of this training are delivered by central office?

7. What are the primary instructional needs of the teachers in this district?

    a. How well do the current coaches address those needs? How do you know?

    b. What could be improved?

    c. How do you understand/correlate the instructional needs of teachers to the instructional needs of students?

8. Describe the role of the coaches in conducting Common Planning Time (CPT). What of this work is aligned with district goals? How does that get negotiated?

9. As central office administrator, if you could change anything about the way the school and district coaches' role and delivery is organized, what would those changes be?

10. What do you recommend for the future?

Central Office District Coach/Coordinator Interview Protocol:

1. Please tell me your name, school and number of years that you have been in this coordinator/district coach position.

2. Describe the purpose(s) and expectations of the coaching program in your subject area.

    a. Are these purposes related to student performance data? If so, how?

    b. Are these purposes related to school and/or district goals? If so, how?

3. What conditions of learning do you consider important to the achievement of your (Math, ELA, Science, etc.) coaching program expectations?

    a. What is your role in creating these conditions?

    b. Who else plays a role?

4. Describe your current role and how you spend your time.

    a. From your perspective, what are the most important duties that you perform?

    b. From your perspective, what are the least important duties you perform?

    c. Does your daily schedule adequately reflect your discipline's instructional priorities?

    d. Describe all the types of training that you currently receive or deliver, whether coach related or not.

   a. What types of training are most valuable from your perspective?

       i. What parts of this training are delivered/organized through your discipline unit?

       ii. What parts of this training are delivered/organized by other central office staff?

5. How effective do your participating teachers find the current coaching program for your subject discipline? How many teachers receive coaching or training through your leadership? How are they chosen?

   a. What changes would you make to better address their instructional needs?

   b. Do the instructional needs of the teachers address the primary instructional needs of the students? If so, how?

   c. How does your content reach the PLC or CPT structure? How do they use it in their practice?

   d. How many teachers are impacted?

6. If you could change anything about the way your role and delivery is organized, what would those changes be in prioritized order? What would you be able to accomplish with these changes that is not happening now?

APPENDIX F: TIME ANALYSIS

Upper School Coach Time Analysis

Intensive Coaching Model: 17 hrs/week + 9 hr/month
- Coach one grade level team intensively for 1 trimester a year

- Observe/in class coaching 5 days per week (5hrs/week)

- Coaching session with grade level math teaching team-general ed, SEI, Academics, and special educators. (1 hr/week)

- Disciplinary Literacy meeting with whole grade level team (1hr/week)

- Coaching session every other week for other two grade level math teams not in intensive coaching trimester (1hr/week)

- Coaching prep, DL prep, data management/analysis (4 hr/week)

- Daily flexible coaching hour available to teachers/teams for observations and additional meetings as needed (5 hrs/week)

- Middle School Coaches Meetings (2hrs/month)
    - 11/6, 12/9, 1/7, 2/4

- District Coaches Meetings (7hr/month)

Instructional Leadership: 3 hr/week + 3 hr/month
- Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meeting (1-1.5 hr/week)

- ILT work & planning: 1.5 hr/week

- Bi-weekly School Cabinet Meetings (2 hrs/month)

- Monthly School Council Meetings (1hr/month)

Additional School Based Professional Development
- September 17th, 2013 Faculty PD on School Improvement Plan (1.5 hr)

- February 24th, 2014 Faculty PD on School Improvement Plan (1.5 hr)

- Weekly Disciplinary Literacy PD with Grade Level Team (60 min/week)

- Math PD on Accountable Talk & Math Practice Standards: 2/25, 3/11, 4/8 (90 min x 3 session=4.5 hrs)

Community/Family Outreach & Education
- November 14, 2013: Parent Coffee on Differentiation (1hr)

- January 12, 2013: Parent Coffee on Differentiation in Math (1hr)

- School STEM Night 3/19/14
  - 3hr: facilitate planning committee meetings
  - 2.5 hr for event

Intervention: 18.5 hrs/week
- 12 hrs of intervention group instruction per week (12 hr/week)
- Intervention prep and looking at student work (3.5 hr/week)

APPENDIX G: A Framework of School Benchmarks for CPS Coaching (Draft)

RFP: Identify outcomes or benchmarks that the district may use to measure success after implementing program modifications or enhancements.

Note: These are the primary benchmarks that will result in increased student achievement. The rubric can be narrative response, but local metrics can be established for the indicators.

A FRAMEWORK OF SCHOOL BENCHMARKS FOR CPS COACHING

METRIC INDICATORS	BASELINE	EOY	EXPLANATION
TEACHER CHOICE: Numbers and type of teacher applicants is increasing every year			
TEACHER CAPACITY: Teachers rate school, PD as relevant and useful to their goals			
Teacher Retention: Stats are increasing every year			
TEACHER MORALE: Satisfaction ratings are increasing every year			
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: number and type of students needed increasing			
TEACHER ACCESS: Adequate school coach time scheduled for 4 one on ones per year per teacher with at least one shared as feedback to the grade level team			

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COACHING	BASELINE	MID YEAR	EOY /EXPLANATION
Adequate schedule time for collaborative grade/pedagogic teams to meet weekly			
Commitment of the principal to be a support partner in daily coach work			
Commitment of the principal to lead PLC and be held accountable to school goal outcomes			
Types of school resource requests match student learning priorities			
Distributed leadership and			

decision-making by the principal to talented teacher leaders			
Data-driven diagnosis and common teaching priorities			
Coach and teacher leader hiring aligned to school goal expectations			
Interventionists included on grade level teams			

TEACHER PD ESSENTIALS	BASELINE	MID YEAR	EOY/EXPLANATION
GROUNDED: It must be grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant driven.			
COLLABORATIVE: It must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than on individual teachers.			
SUSTAINED: It must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.			
STUDENT WORK: It must be connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students.			
CONCRETE: It must engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development.			
CONNECTED: It must be connected to other aspects of school change to form a systemic approach at both the school and district level.			

SYSTEM REINFORCEMENT	BASELINE	MID YEAR	EOY/EXPLANATION
Clear coaching purpose and job description			

PLC facilitated by principal weekly • Set coach schedules • Review student data • Set school goals • Share school practice • Set PD topics and schedule • Request resources from Coordinator Team (curricular content, customized data, intervention diagnostics, classroom video)			
New reporting structure and the double cluster reorganization pathway.			
Cross share beyond the school level within cluster of pathway schools			

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