Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

NC SIP Coaching Collaborative

Thank you for your interest in the North Carolina State Improvement Project (NC SIP) Coaching Collaborative. This document provides a framework for the active implementation of evidence- based reading and math practices through coaching. Please note that the coaching collaborative will be tailored to the unique strengths and needs of selected Local Education Agencies (LEAs). As a result, the intent of this document is to provide an overview of the project, and not a fixed protocol for implementation.

For additional questions not addressed in this document, please contact Dr. Paula Crawford at paula.crawford@dpi.nc.gov or the Exceptional Children (EC) literacy or math consultant in your region.

**WHY?**

**Why is coaching being emphasized by the NC SIP project?**

The purpose of the North Carolina State Improvement Project (NC SIP) is to improve the quality of instruction for students with disabilities through personnel development and on-site technical assistance for public schools and university teacher education programs. The content of Foundations of Reading and Foundations of Mathematics has been carefully designed utilizing theories of adult learning to convey knowledge of evidence-based practices for students with persistent reading and math difficulties. However, research elucidates the complex processes involved in transferring evidence-based practice to the classroom setting. One driver that significantly enhances this transfer is instructional coaching. A hallmark study conducted by Joyce and Showers (2002) demonstrated little to no transfer of new skills to practice through the use of professional development activities that provided information and theory. When information and theory was accompanied by demonstration, the effect size remained 0.00. Thus, it could be surmised that professional development activities lacking follow up typically translate to no meaningful application in the classroom setting. However, when professional development activities were followed by job-embedded coaching, an effect size of 1.42 was obtained (the effect size used in this meta-analysis represents the difference in means between coaching and control groups in pooled standard deviation units). This represents a large transfer of training content to professional practice and strongly supports the pairing of coaching with professional development activities. Not surprisingly, Dean Fixsen, co-chair of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), noted that “students cannot benefit from interventions they don’t receive.” If the purpose of NC SIP is to be achieved, it is necessary to actively apply coaching to the implementation process.

**WHO?**

**Who will be selected?**

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will be selected through an objective and transparent multiple-gateway process. The activities that comprise the selection process are described below:

* Meet requirements of all baseline criteria (i.e., red items) on the 2013-2014 Developmental Review.
* Attend a coaching overview meeting on September 26, 2014 with a LEA level implementation team.
* Complete a written application providing description of various organizational, leadership, and competency drivers that are present within the LEA. Each application will be blindly scored by NC DPI representatives utilizing a quantitative scoring rubric. The total raw scores will be averaged to obtain a final score. The top six applicants will be invited to participate in a formal interview at NC DPI.
* Participate in a formal interview at NC DPI to further describe exploration of coaching, implementation drivers present in the LEA, and the “goodness of fit” for the coaching collaborative. The interviews will be scored using a quantitative rubric. The top four LEAs will be selected to join the coaching collaborative during the 2014-2015 school year. Two LEAs will join the collaborative in November, with two more following in February.

**Who will coach?**

LEAs will determine the appropriate number of instructional coaches to participate in the collaborative during the 2014-2015 school year. Coaches will likely be selected from individuals who currently serve in a coaching or instructional support capacity within the LEA. According to Killion & Harrison (2006) effective coaches demonstrate the following characteristics:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Beliefs** | **Teaching expertise** | **Coaching skills** |
| * Is willing to learn
* Has a passion for ongoing development
* Believes in others’ capacity to grow and develop
* Has an attitude that everyone is important
* Does not presume to have “The Answer”
* Understands his or her own assumptions and makes those transparent
* Is committed to continuous improvement
* Has a moral purpose
* Can let go of feeling responsible for another person’s behaviors
 | * Is skilled in instructional planning
* Demonstrates success in his or her work as a classroom teacher
* Reflects on his or her own practice
* Articulates his or her own practice
* Uses multiple methods of assessing students
* Has strong classroom organization and management
* Is fluent in multiple methods of delivering instruction
 | * Understands and applies knowledge about adult development
* Diagnoses teachers’ needs
* Aligns support to teachers’ identified needs
* Communicates effectively
* Listens skillfully
* Uses effective questioning skills
* Understands and employs a specific reflection process
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| **Relationship skills** | **Content expertise** | **Leadership skills** |
| * Has good interpersonal relationships
* Wants to be part of a team
* Fosters trust
* Works effectively with teachers and principals
* Is respected by peers
* Has patience for the learning process
 | * Possesses and applies appropriate, in-depth content knowledge
* Uses research and theory to support instructional decisions
* Establishes a collegial learning environment to support teachers in reflecting on their practice
* Stays current with changes in curricula and new instructional practices
 | * Stays abreast of best practices
* Engages others in developing plans for improvement
* Maintains a productive culture
* Communicates the school’s vision
* Aligns work with schools goals
* Uses data to make decisions
* Understands and applies knowledge about change
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Killion, Harrison, Bryan & Clifton, 2012

**Who will be coached?**

The initial focus of the project will be teachers who have received Foundations of Reading and/or Math and have received program training (those teachers who currently collect student data for the NC SIP project). The impetus of this decision is to equip teachers with the content knowledge for teaching that is obtained within Foundations of Reading and / or Math, the knowledge for implementation of an evidence-based practice and /or program, and the feedback associated with coaching that increases fidelity of implementation. It is the intent of the project that this confluence of professional development and coaching will translate into enhanced use of evidence-based practices and subsequently, better student outcomes.

**Who will coach the coaches?**

Coaches within LEAs will be coached by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) Exceptional Children’s literacy and math consultants. Additionally, the coaching-of-coaches will be overseen by Dr. Marci Rock and a cohort of Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded scholars at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNC-G).

**WHEN**

* September 26, 2014 Coaching Overview Meeting with LEA Implementation Teams
* October 7, 2014 Applications are due electronically to Paula Crawford

 by 5:00 PM (paula.crawford@dpi.nc.gov)

* October 22-23, 2014 Interviews for Participation in the Coaching Collaborative
* November, 2014 Announcement of Selected Sites
* November 21, 2014 Initial Coaching Collaborative Professional Development and

 Implementation Team Planning

* Ongoing Meetings for implementing LEAs to share information and

 engage in Plan-Do-Study-Act processes

Future Dates to be Determined (as part of team planning process)

**WHAT**

**What coaching model(s) will be utilized?**

The coaching collaborative will be flexible in regard to the models of coaching based on the contextual strengths and needs of the LEA. It will be critical to implementation, that a full continuum of coaching opportunities are provided (e.g., one-to-one, group, peer observation of best practice). The selection of a coaching model will be based on a comprehensive assessment using validated tools. The table below briefly describes five coaching models, goals of the model, and contexts in which the model may be considered.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Coaching Model** | **Goal** | **When to Consider** |
| **Instructional Coaching** | To increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by supporting teachers in implementing proven practices, reflecting on their instructional decisions, and making needed adjustments. | When there is a gap between teachers’ knowledge and their implementation of instructional strategies, and student learning results could improve. |
| **Content Coaching** | To increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by focusing on improving content knowledge and skills. | When teachers need content specific support to learn curriculum, assessment strategies, and pedagogy. |
| **Technical Coaching** | To increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by improving knowledge of processes, procedures, resources, and protocols. | When teachers needs support to be more self-directed. |
| **Cognitive Coaching** | To increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by developing the teacher’s ability to make intentional instructional decisions and to reflect and learn from those decisions. | When masterful teachers want to improve or teachers demonstrate a need to improve. |
| **Peer Coaching** | To increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by providing opportunities for co-learning about effective instruction. | When two or more colleagues wish to collaborate in order to improve their knowledge and skills about instruction. |

Killion, Harrison, Bryan, & Clifton, 2012

**What professional development for coaching is being offered?**

Comprehensive professional development will be offered to selected sites. A continuum of activities (from broad to specific) is described below.  *The first bulleted item will be offered to all LEAs involved with NC SIP.*

* LEA and school level implementation teams will access and work through online coaching modules developed by Dr. Marci Rock and her team of OSEP scholars. These modules are estimated to take approximately one and a half hours each to complete. Selected LEAs are expected to complete the modules by the November 21st meeting.
* Selected LEAs will attend a full-day introduction and work-day with NC DPI and UNC-G representatives on November 21st.
* Selected LEAs may choose to use funds to purchase copies of *Coaching Matters,* the best practices framework, and will participate in a book study with NC DPI consultants using the online tools provided through LearningForward.org publications and *Coaching Matters*.
* Selected LEA coaches will receive ongoing, coaching-of-coaches by the NC DPI/UNC-G implementation team throughout the year. This will occur in the context of one-to-one and group coaching. LEA coaches can expect to interact with NC DPI/UNC-G coaches at least once per month.
* Selected LEA implementation teams will meet with the NC DPI/UNC-G implementation team regularly. These meetings will focus on continued development of effective coaching practices, assessment processes, and utilizing data to problem solve any barriers to the implementation process.

**What is being coached?**

The content of the coaching will be dependent upon the contextual strengths and needs of the LEA. Based on a comprehensive assessment, the following skills and teacher behaviors could be coached:

* General evidence-based pedagogical practices, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter (e.g., positive reinforcement and high access tasks)
* Content specific evidence-based practices that are unique to teaching reading or mathematics (e.g., high-leverage practices)
* Program specific practices that are aimed at increasing the fidelity with which an evidence-based program is implemented

**What are the expectations of LEAs involved with the coaching collaborative?**

The expectations for partners involved in the coaching collaborative are clearly outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Provided below is an overview of some of those expectations. (Refer to MOA for complete list)

LEAs involved with the coaching collaborative are:

* Develop a LEA-level implementation team that aligns work with the NC DPI / UNC-G Implementation Team
* Create a detailed job description (coach)
* The coaching coordinator/contact meets with coaches at least once monthly to receive feedback on the coaching implementation in the schools, coordinate LEA Coaching Network meetings, and outline formal principal/coach/teacher agreement
* Convene coaches and principals periodically to review partnership agreements and coaching efficacy data
* Budget for material resources to support the coach’s work
* Provide and plan LEA level professional development for coaches
* Regularly share work at regional coordinator and other project meetings

**What are the expectations of principals involved in the coaching collaborative?**

(Refer to MOA for complete list)

* Pre-determine a schedule for quarterly coaching meetings to discuss roles, goals, challenges, and results
* Allocate time for teachers to meet with coaches
* Define confidentiality between coaches and teachers in writing
* Communicate clear expectations of how school coaches will work with staff

**What are the expectations of coaches involved in the coaching collaborative?**

(Refer to MOA for complete list)

* Create communication protocols to communicate needs, requests, and feedback to the principal
* Develop partnership agreements with teachers to define the work and clarify expectations of coach and teacher (include confidentiality)
* Co-facilitate teacher teams with grade-level and department heads
* Create structures for building teacher capacity (create teacher leaders)
* Utilize teachers’ feedback to improve practice
* Collect accurate data for the program evaluation
* Improve fidelity of research based program implementation
* Attend professional development related to coaching model
* Design a conflict resolution process to address any conflicts between teachers and coaches

**What is the continuum of technology that may be used?**

There is a wide continuum of technology available that could fit the budget and Instructional Technology (IT) capacity of any LEA. Coaching could occur with high-cost (e.g., $667) advanced technology that is specifically tailored for bug-in-ear coaching (BIE), to low-cost (e.g., $95) off-the-shelf technology components (some of which the LEA may already own). Additionally, the LEA may choose to use models of coaching that are not dependent upon the purchase of new technology. For more information on the continuum of technology please visit: <http://www.inearcoaching.com/modules/tkh/Plan.htm>

**What is the expected cost associated with the coaching collaborative?**

Varies - to be determined in the LEA.

**What is the expected time commitment from LEAs?**

It is difficult to estimate a specific amount of time that would be devoted to the coaching collaborative. Variables associated with current organizational frameworks would greatly impact the degree to which time commitments in current roles and responsibilities would be altered. Additionally, the selection process is intentionally structured to match the goals of the project to current frameworks established within the LEA.

Each LEA would likely be able to gauge the amount of time that would be devoted to the project through analysis of current roles and responsibilities and how they are matched with the expectations and professional development activities that are detailed within this document. For instance, there are activities that all LEAs would commit to as described in this document and the MOA. (Refer to MOA for complete list) These activities include:

Implementation Team:

* Completion of the five online coaching modules. Each module takes approximately an hour and a half to complete.
* Reading and participating in a book study of *Coaching Matters.* This will involve approximately three hours per month until completed.
* Participation in monthly coaching meetings. This will involve approximately two hours per month.
* Sharing your work with other LEAs. This will occur during regularly scheduled regional coordinator meetings and the spring networking meeting.

Coaches:

* Two coaching-of-coaches sessions per month. Each session will last approximately two hours
* Facilitation of data collection for problem-solving and evaluation. This will take approximately five hours per month.
* Coaching of teachers involved with the NC SIP. This will be estimated based on the strengths and needs of the LEA.

Teachers:

* Working with coaches and participating in follow up activities. This will be estimated on the strengths and needs of the teacher.
* Collecting data for problem-solving and evaluation. This will take approximately three and a half hours per month.

**What is the focus, reading or math?**

This decision will be based upon the contextual strengths, needs, and interests of the LEA. The coaching collaborative is being developed to support coaching for evidence-based practices in reading and math. During the initial implementation, the LEA would choose **either** reading **or** math as an initial focus.

**What additional funding will selected LEAs receive?**

Upon approval, funding will be provided through NC SIP to support this work.

**HOW**

**How does implementation science play a role?**

The Coaching Collaborative will work within the context of implementation science to implement evidence-based practices in reading and math. The implementation of evidence-based practice will follow the frameworks developed through implementation science that include: the determination of usable interventions, understanding that implementation occurs through predictable recursive stages, the application of drivers that are associated with successful implementation, the use of teaming structures, and implementation through improvement cycles. The NC DPI / UNC-G implementation team will initially provide intense professional development and coaching-of-coaches. However, the goal of the project is to develop LEA-level capacity and sustainability. The project will involve a scheduled gradual release of support from the NC DPI and UNC-G implementation team and funding as the LEA develops this capacity. Additionally, various tools available at the Active Implementation Hub will be utilized throughout implementation. More information surrounding the application of implementation science can be found at: <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/>

**How will this work be evaluated?**

A comprehensive evaluation plan is currently in development with collaboration between NC DPI, UNC-G, and external evaluators (Compass Evaluation and Research). The evaluation process will utilize tools that collect data relevant to process (e.g. strength and needs assessment, coaching evaluation tools, program/instructional fidelity, the developmental review process) and outcome measures (e.g. quantitative measurement of changes in teacher behavior, mclass data, Number Knowledge Test data).