



## **APLM-WRITE Implementation and Coaching Success: The School Administrator's Guide**

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### **Introduction**

The school administrator leads to advance quality professional learning experiences. Instructional coaching is a necessary and complex component of professional development that helps ensure instructional fidelity of evidence-based practices. School resources, personnel, and unique organizational processes must be nurtured and safeguarded by school administrators who have the authority, expertise, and vision to operationalize and lead effective coaching experiences.

Initial research data on APLM WRITE coaching confirms the imperative need to earmark essential responsibilities of school administrators. This document highlights these research findings and identifies dynamic conditions that distinguish major administrative influencers of coaching success. The information aims to assist leaders in leveraging pragmatic supports that respect the learning community and address the reality of existing school circumstances.

The APLM Framework provides a foundation to guide administrators as they develop quality instructional coaching systems. Three overarching and interrelated domains of Resources, Personnel and Processes anchor conditions that can be assessed, monitored, and supported through examination of their influence on professional development and instruction. Administrative attention to these elements ensures inclusive provisions that grow prime coaching conditions.

Teacher, administrator, and coach survey results collectively identify key areas of influence that impact staff experiences, capacities, motivations, and perceptions about the coaching process. The following sections highlight important considerations that can be explored in conjunction with the team's online APLM Vision and Survey data and then actualized through APLM WRITE Planning Guides.

## **Infrastructure for Professional Learning**

Assessment and modification of school infrastructure require thoughtful planning to ensure success. Prior to implementation of a new innovation, foundational systems must be in place. Otherwise, administrators may find themselves in a cycle of “whack-a-mole” responses to emerging implementation stressors, resistance, and instructional issues. The implementation of APLM WRITE coaching entails advance identification of key stakeholders, resource provision, time management, and fit within the culture and strategic plan of the school. The following considerations may assist leadership teams in examining the degree to which research-based recommendations support coaching infrastructure in their schools.

### **Personnel Indicators of Success**

**Indicator: ASSESS and HONOR individual characteristics of the staff to meet their needs, existing competencies, and goals.**

Rationale: Knight (2019) indicates, “People are rarely motivated by others' goals, and a one-size-fits-all model of change rarely provides helpful solutions for the individual complexities of each unique classroom” (p. 7). Teachers and coaches thrive when they feel respected for their individual capacities and beliefs. It is important that administrators show their support of staff input to decisions about coaching partnerships.

Administrative Considerations:

- Appraise staff willingness, readiness and interest in forming peer relationships when planning for coaching team partnerships. Veteran staff members have expertise and embedded routines that must be respected; additionally, they may view coaching as an “add-on” to multiple responsibilities they incur over the years (Ali, et al., 2020). Novice teachers require foundational instructional skill development and emotional support to reduce burnout and increase resilience (Boer, (2023).
- Ensure that coaches are perceived as having high levels of credibility and content related skills that are acknowledged by the administrator and teachers (Matsumura, et al., 2009).
- Consider that willing partners will demonstrate greater success in achieving instructional goals; teachers’ sense of autonomy and choice in partnership assignment are critical to success. (Knight, 2019).

**Indicator: SELECT coaching teams.**

Rationale: After assessment of key interests and capacities of potential coaching teams, purposeful staff selection may be initiated.

#### Administrative Considerations:

- Assign coaches who demonstrate high levels of content knowledge, strong working relationship and communication skills, and the ability to help teachers understand the use of data to plan instruction (Akhaven, 2015).
- Select teachers who are ready to engage in the coaching process. (Toll, 2014). They may act as ambassadors to gain momentum with more resistant colleagues.

#### **Indicator: CLARIFY and PUBLICIZE roles and responsibilities.**

Rationale: Adults need clear information about the roles and responsibilities associated with assigned partnerships.

#### Administrative Considerations:

- Name the specific instructional roles of the administrator, instructional teachers, and instructional coaches (Coburn & Russell, 2008).
- Clarify roles of the administrator versus coach to confirm the difference between evaluative and collegial relationships (Meadows Center, 2023).
- Reduce emphasis on non-instructional duties for assigned coaches (Matsumura, et al., 2009).
- Establish a manageable “caseload” of partnerships for each coach to ensure depth of support (Booker, et al., 2022).
- Publicly endorse the coach as a credible and important source of expertise (Matsumura, et. al., (2009).

### **Process Indicators of Success**

#### **Indicator: IDENTIFY purposeful learning formats.**

Rationale: In general, teachers will not apply new instructional practices if the only source of professional learning is a one-time workshop (Cornett & Knight, 2024). Studies indicate that 0–5 percent of learning transfers to the classroom under traditional methods of professional development), while 90–95 percent transfers through peer coaching (IRIS Center, 2013). A variety of professional learning formats can help teachers expand their knowledge and expertise through practice and collaboration with colleagues (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

#### Administrative Considerations:

- Support initial small-group training through subsequent instructional coaching activities that involve multiple observations, feedback, and modeling (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).
- Consider that coaches may assist in designing and developing instructional lessons (Colburn & Woulfin, 2012).
- Acknowledge the expertise of coaches in helping teachers adapt learning environments to meet the needs of struggling students (Troia, 2014).

- Provide coaches with professional growth opportunities. Coaches benefit from their own professional learning experiences through observation and feedback with other coaches (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Most schools do not have formal professional development plans for instructional coaches; many coaches feel unprepared for their roles (Tate, 2024).

**Indicator: DEVELOP comprehensive schedules.**

Rationale: Learning experiences are effective when teachers and coaches engage through a confirmed schedule of regular observation-feedback cycles. Recurrent coaching sessions ensure continuity across meetings so that teachers can apply and reflect on feedback (Meadows Center, 2023).

Administrative Considerations:

- Determine timeframes for coaching schedules so that cycles of instructional support can be offered. To build capacity through scaffolded learning, coaches meet regularly with teachers; it is generally recommended that teachers benefit from a minimum of 10 hours of coaching after initial professional development (Meadows Center, 2023).
- Schedule coaching partnerships with a focus on classroom support to emphasize instructional growth and related student outcomes (Meadows Center, 2023).
- Control coaching workloads. Effective coaches build relationships with the teachers and students they support; to prevent overload of responsibilities, coaches' workload should be limited to support teachers in one to three schools (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018).

**Indicator: ASSESS infrastructure processes.**

Rationale: Leadership teams monitor the effectiveness of their coaching model and implementation processes regularly. Plans are refined and adapted based on feedback about instructional impact and resulting student achievement.

Administrative Considerations:

- Conduct frequent needs assessments to monitor the match of experiences to intended coaching outcomes and to measure stakeholder satisfaction with the process (Darling Hammond, 2017).
- Use data sources such as surveys, student progress, observations, and fidelity checklists to assess current conditions and to refine coaching plans (Meadows Center, 2023).

**Indicator: FOSTER collaboration.**

Rationale: Principals influence the quality of instructional coaching by nurturing staff collaboration and communication (Supovitz, et al., 2010).

#### Administrative Considerations:

- Demonstrate respect for teachers' professional expertise and knowledge (NCTE, 2022).
- Invite teachers to contribute their knowledge and expertise (NCTE, 2022).
- Create a safe instructional environment where educators can collaborate and practice without fear of judgment or criticism (Neufeld & Roper, 2003).
- Expand collaborations beyond single coach/teacher relationships; provide opportunities through whole grade level, departments, and comprehensive school collaborations to share ideas, problem-solve, and support peers (Breslow, 2020).

#### **Indicator: ANCHOR plans in school reform efforts.**

Rationale: "Coaching is school-based professional development designed in light of the district's reform agenda and guided by the goal of meeting schools' specific instructional learning needs" (Neufeld & Roper, 2003 p.4). Adult learners need to understand the relationship of their work to the school's vision and goals.

#### Administrative Considerations:

- Encourage coaches to help teachers thread connections between practice, theory and school policies (Woulfin & Rigby, 2017).
- Align plans with content standards, student achievement goals, and assessments (Yoon, et. al., 2007).

### **Resource Indicators of Success**

#### **Indicator: ASSESS and ADJUST current resource accessibility.**

Rationale: Administrators determine the degree to which educators have ready access to time and materials needed to initiate and implement a new innovation with fidelity.

#### Administrative Considerations:

- Ensure funding of needed resources. Instructional coaching results in greater student achievement and lower costs than intervention modes such as tutoring and extended year learning programs (Booker, 2022).
- Provide instructional materials in advance of program initiation. Implementation fidelity depends on resource accessibility (Scheibel, 2023).
- Allocate sufficient time for coaches and teachers to implement without distraction from non-instructional duties and material preparation (Scheibel, 2023).
- Support technology needs of the team for data collection and analysis (Weaver & Hayes, 2024).
- Consider that both virtual and in-person coaching can be successful when regular meeting opportunities are provided (Meadows Center, 2023).

## **Infrastructure for Classroom Implementation**

Professional development is best achieved when it lives and grows in the daily instructional practice of educators. Administrative support of active coaching partners provides avenues for teachers to implement new instructional approaches with their own students through ongoing guidance of experts (Kane et. al., 2018).

## **Personnel Indicators of Success**

**Indicator: ADVANCE coaching systems that empower educators.**

Rationale: Strong coaching relationships empower teachers to implement new practices (Knight, 2019).

Administrative Considerations:

- Support coaches to guide teachers' self-directed learning, personal growth, and improved professional performance (Hattie, 2012).
- Incorporate tenets of adult learning theory. Adults need to know why they should learn and implement presented information. They need to relate the content of new learning to their own real-world circumstances (Yoon, et. al., 2007).
- Assist coaches to help teachers build their capacities in understanding and use of data to drive instruction (March & Farrell, 2015; Guskey, 2003).

## **Process Indicators of Success**

**Indicator: BUILD a culture that values coaching.**

Rationale: The school community can create positive change through a strong work culture. All members must feel a sense of belonging and must value the organization.

Administrative Considerations:

- Expose the underlying values, beliefs, and rituals of the organization that are expressed through enacted behaviors of the staff (Hattangadi, 2017).
- Examine how core values of the staff align with strategic plans; set a course of action that responds to the cultural underpinnings of the organization (Tralli, 2022).
- Develop a communal commitment to integrating respectful and clear accountability measures (Elmore, 2005).
- Encourage voice and leadership roles for all stakeholders to build school-wide collective efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

**Indicator: PRIORITIZE approaches that strengthen instructional practices.**

Rationale: When offered through differentiated venues and focused methods, coaching can be tailored to help teachers improve their instructional practices.

Administrative Considerations:

- Ensure that coaching activities are differentiated to meet the needs and setting demands of each teacher (Moran, 2007).
- Emphasize coaching of evidence-based methods; practice coupled with feedback opportunities predict further teacher use of evidence-based classroom strategies (Glover, et. al., 2023).
- Monitor that classroom coaching emphasizes content acquisition; effective coaching focuses on strategy applications that relate to specific curricular content standards and goals (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2017).

**Indicator: ENSURE practices are student-focused.**

Rationale: The ultimate goal of instructional coaching is to safeguard equitable and rigorous opportunities that support all students in achieving expected learning goals.

Administrative Considerations:

- Center coaching around student needs to ensure methods accomplish intended learning goals (Killion & Harrison, 2006).
- Collect and analyze student assessment data frequently to progress-monitor student growth on relevant skills (Mellard & Johnson, 2008).
- Encourage direct coaching support in the classroom through expert interactions with students through modeling, co-teaching, and observation (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2017).

## **Resource Indicators of Success**

**Indicator: MONITOR and ADAPT resource provision as instructional needs evolve.**

Rationale: Continual access to resources, coupled with responsive adaptations that meet the changing needs of staff during instruction, are critical to coaching success.

Administrative Considerations:

- Monitor and address time, staffing, and material resources to support research-based implementation procedures over time (Cook & Odom, 2013).
- Assess staff opposition in accepting new instructional resources; educators may resist due to their need for instructional autonomy and due to their expertise with other methods (Tralli, 2022).

## Summary

Organizational oversight is a cornerstone of school change and sustainability. It is important to design systems that support effective instructional coaching based on the unique characteristics of each school community. Principal support for coaching positively predicts teacher engagement in coaching activities (Booker, et. al., 2022). The tools provided in this document open avenues for administrators to build, support, and reflect on the quality of coaching conditions that ultimately support student achievement. Banerji (2024, p. 1) notes that “many levers need to be pulled” for effective change and many of those tasks fall to the school administrator. This reality showcases the significant responsibilities of the administration to engage in continual cycles of reflective practice. The APLM Write system supports the diligent work of conscientious and dedicated administrators in safeguarding quality practices.

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