

Instructional Expert Development Group

Description: Meeting the Instructional Capacity Challenge

The Instructional Expert Development Group (IEDG), led by the principal and composed of administrators, coaches, and teacher leaders who have been identified as instructional experts, is focused on developing teacher capacity as a means to effectively support strong, college- and career- ready standards (CCRS) aligned instruction throughout the building.

Typically, the IEDG is a subset of the broader Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and is focused explicitly on building the practice of those who play coaching roles in the school. In most schools, the ILT is composed of instructional experts like assistant principals, academic deans, coaches, as well as the teachers who represent the key instructional groups of the school, for example, grade level or content teams, special education and ELL teams, electives, career and technology, etc. The role of the ILT is to determine the school's instructional vision, plan faculty professional learning, track progress toward meeting PD objectives, lead analysis of student data, make decisions about the school's curriculum and assessments, and more. The ILT is larger and broader than the IEDG, which has a more narrow membership and specific focus toward content- and grade-specific observation and coaching.

The IEDG has three specific charges: 1.) to improve members' effectiveness in facilitation and coaching, 2.) to build the knowledge and practice related to specific content areas and grade levels for which individual coaches are responsible, and 3.) to feed data and recommendations about teacher growth and needs to the ILT to monitor and evolve professional learning and instructional decisions across the entire building. IEDG members meet as a group at least once every other week and participate in learning walks regularly to address problems of practice, norm, and to deepen understanding of the standards and effective coaching practices. Additionally, IEDG members are also engaged in their own on-going learning to build upon their content and grade-level expertise.

Rationale: Just like teachers, instructional experts require meaningful opportunities to norm on and improve their practice of helping teachers grow. Research shows that coaches need time and support to develop their own coaching practice and to grow their own content knowledge and its applications. "Coaches must be knowledgeable about not only their content area, but also district reform goals, achievement standards, and adult learning. Meeting such a range of goals requires that coaches possess strong communication and interpersonal skills, consistently follow through with support for teachers, and demonstrate a willingness to listen and learn." (Annenberg Report, citing Neufeld and Roper 2003)

KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

1. A principal who personally models a growth mindset and commitment to continuous improvement in service of the instructional vision.
2. A CCRS objective-focused instructional vision and connected professional learning plan and structures that integrate group PD, CPT, and observation and coaching cycles.
3. Sufficient number of instructional experts to ensure ratios of 8 to 12 teachers per full-time administrator or coach, and 2 to 4 teachers per part-time teacher leader.
4. Instructional experts who have had their expertise validated against the college and career-ready standards for the subject and grade levels they are supporting.
5. Professional learning resources (written/online texts, observation tools, videos, rubrics and/or people) that have been research/field-validated for coaching and CCRS expertise for the target subjects and grade levels.
6. Structures to define and measure individual instructional expert roles and performance, including job descriptions, annual professional goals, and semi-annual evaluations using multiple data sources (student assessment data, teacher feedback survey data, etc.); and a plan to monitor the group's progress and inform continuous improvement.
7. Sufficient time allocated to support the professional learning of the instructional experts, including instructional expert development meetings, group learning walks, outside/district professional development, and weekly principal supervision.
8. High quality, CCRS-aligned curriculum and assessments as a foundation for teaching and coaching efforts.

Clarify purpose: Before making decisions about how to organize resources around an advisory program, clarify its purpose in your school.

Below are examples of purpose questions and aligned goals:

- *What is the overarching purpose of the IEDG and what are the common goals against which you will measure the group's progress? Both goals should be aligned with the instructional vision and focus for the school as articulated by the ILT, and informed by a baseline assessment of the group's CCRS knowledge and needs.*

For example: "The purpose of your IEDG is to A.) advance the understanding of CCRS practice of your instructional experts, and specifically this year on Core Action 2: Employ questions and tasks, both oral and written, that are text-specific and reflect the standards, and B.) to learn and apply principles of adult learning in your coaching, and specifically that of psychological safety."

Sample goals aligned to this purpose: A.) Increase the number of effective text-specific questions posed by teachers as measured by observation data. B.) Teachers will feel a higher degree of psychological safety during coaching conversations as measured by data from teacher surveys.

- *Given its identified purpose, how does the IEDG support the work of the ILT? How do IEDG members participate with the ILT? For instance, both groups function to deepen members' understanding of the CCRS and its expression in the school. How do they work together to identify, monitor, and meet teacher professional learning needs?*

MAKING IT WORK: RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS



PEOPLE: Note implications for Job and Teacher Assignment, Hiring Plan, and Annual Professional Learning Plan

Decide who your instructional experts are and their assignments by subject and grade.

IEDG members conduct observation and coaching cycles and will likely include the principal, other administrators (assistant principal, director of instruction, academic dean), coaches, special education and ELL leads, and teacher leaders.

In the Observation and Coaching Building Block Profile we emphasize that instructional experts require demonstrated expertise in the target subject (ELA, math, social studies, or science) and grade band in the context of CCRS and they help to consistently reinforce a professional learning culture of continuous learning. In case you're still composing your IEDG, the questions below are repeated for guidance.

Key Questions:

- *How will you assess the instructional expertise of people serving in instructional support positions by subject and grade level, and in particular in the context of college and career-ready standards?*
- *Are current or potential instructional experts also able to model a growth mindset focused on support and continuous improvement?*
- *Do your current staff who hold instructional expert positions have the right expertise? If no...*
 - *Is any reassignment possible/necessary to achieve a better match of expertise with role?*
 - *What new hiring might be needed to get the expertise you want?*
- *What qualities for instructional expert candidates “bridge the gap” to warrant appointing someone with insufficient expertise?*
- *Though the ideal is to place only people with demonstrated CCRS expertise into instructional expert positions, sometimes you may need to appoint people who don’t yet have the CCRS expertise or experience. In that case, what are the “bridge the gap” qualities they must possess?*
 - *One scenario is that you have teacher leaders who could serve as terrific instructional experts in time but their expertise in the target grade and subject is not well developed currently.*
 - *You could decide that a growth mindset, persistence in learning new content and skills quickly, a drive to help their colleagues improve, and that they are well respected by their colleagues are bridge the gap qualities that validate a decision to place them in minor instructional expert positions that will increase as they grow their skills and knowledge.*
 - *Which teachers have these qualities?*
- *Who will work with which subjects and grades?*

Communicate IEDG group purpose, participation, individual content responsibilities, and relationship with ILT and other teams to stakeholders. Just like with any other top priority at a school, the principal needs to make the case for why the IEDG exists and what its primary purpose is. It’s important for principals to communicate the following:

- What the IEDG is (the description on page one)

- Its specific purpose (that you define) in serving the instructional vision and culture of growth mindset and continuous improvement
- When and how often it meets
- The criteria for participation (members coach teachers as part of their job description)
- Which instructional experts focus on which subjects and grades
- The relationship between the IEDG and the ILT

Note: As noted on page 4, there may initially be weak matches between the expertise of your instructional experts and their subject and/or grade responsibilities. This is often unavoidable in the first year of implementing an IEDG and a strong observation and coaching cycle. Principals and instructional experts should address this issue from the beginning, communicating that while the people appointed to instructional expertise positions may not have the existing CCRS subject/grade expertise required to fulfill their role, they all do possess key “bridge the gap” qualities and that a key focus of the IEDG is on improving the understanding and skills of its members. This transparency is not only critical to successful implementation of an IEDG, but it can also serve as an example to your staff of the type of growth-oriented, continuous learning culture that you seek to cultivate across the school.

Key Questions:

- *Have you provided sufficient communication, in writing and in-person, to ensure that all stakeholders understand the description, purpose, composition and assignments of the IEDG? If not, when and how will you do this?*
- *Have you determined the communication and work relationship between the IEDG and the ILT? Have you checked to make sure all stakeholders in your community understand the relationship?*

Write/refine position descriptions for instructional experts to include their coaching responsibilities, including any development targets of the teachers they coach and/or personal professional growth goals. Each person on the school faculty needs a job description.

To make sure instructional expert job descriptions are current and specific, update them to include the following areas of responsibilities:

- a) Content team support, including CPT facilitation, data preparation, curriculum and assessment materials management, CCRS study, and curriculum planning.
- b) Individual teacher support, including observation and coaching, lesson modeling and co-teaching, and lesson planning.

- c) Professional learning facilitation, including developing PD and/or re-teaching it from district or outside sources.
- d) Continuous personal development of knowledge and skills in instruction, curriculum, and assessments related to the target subject and grades in the context of CCRS; and in the principles and application of adult learning.

As a group, define the targets for teacher growth that will occur as a result of instructional expert support. Combine qualitative measures, such as observed evidence of implementation of coached and professional learning topics, with quantitative measures, such as student performance on assessments.

Finally, the principal and each instructional expert should work to identify specific growth areas, targets for performance, and strategies for reaching them which will be used in regular supervision meetings and formal evaluations.

Key Questions:

- *Are there current and specific job descriptions for each instructional expert position? If not, how will you produce them quickly and well?*
- *What are the targets for teacher growth, and how and when you will measure progress toward meeting them?*
- *Has each instructional expert had an initial supervision meeting with the principal to establish specific growth areas, targets for performance, and strategies for reaching them? If not, when will these meetings happen?*
- *Following your inventory of the individual strengths and growth areas in the IEDG, what are your specific targets for individuals and how will you arrange support to meet them?*

For example, "Our ELA coach has direct teaching, curriculum, and professional learning experience in grades 3 through 6. Her target is developing her knowledge of CCRS and your curriculum and assessments in grades K through 2 so she is well positioned to support those teams. She will do this through participation in Student Achievement Partners webinars and trainings, independent study of SAP online resources, study of the K-2 ELA curriculum and assessments, and through CPT facilitation and observations and planned coaching supported by our Achievement Network coach."

Establish IEDG meeting structures. A centerpiece of the instructional expert job is setting up the structures for productive IEDG team meetings. These regular meetings will be the most consistent way for instructional experts to candidly share their successes and challenges, get feedback and support, and develop their knowledge and judgment. The group will need to establish its meeting norms, agree on typical meeting agendas, protocols that support their discussions, roles and rotation schedules, and more.

Key Questions:

- *What are the norms to ensure an environment of psychological safety and manifest the ideals for groups that you promote through your facilitation of teams*
- *What is the template for the typical agenda? What are the roles and rotation schedules you need?*
- *What protocols, such as the consultancy protocol (see resources) will support discussions?*



TIME: Note implications for your Master Schedule, Job and Teacher Assignment, and Annual Professional Learning Plan

Allocate time for summer and beginning of the year PD for IEDG members to deepen their subject- and grade-specific expertise for application in coaching and content CPT.

Summer— 6 to 10 days

1. First, instructional experts need to learn about and norm on best practices for coaching. An effective, efficient way to do this is for all members to participate in PD together before the school year begins. Suggested resources are provided in the Planning for Implementation section on page 11.

The Leverage Leadership PD program for coaching and observation takes seven hours to complete, but if you have to do additional work like reconciling an existing district observation tool with a CCRS aligned tool like the Instructional Practice Guide, we would suggest adding a few more hours. Additionally, you can decide to do the Leverage Leadership PD on Leading Professional Development and/or Leading Planning, which each take four hours so we recommend you budget 2 to 2.5 days.

2. Second, instructional experts need to explore deeply the CCRS content and school curriculum and assessments for their own subject and grade levels, and work with colleagues to understand the relationships across grade levels.

If the instructional vision includes literacy goals across content areas, then the team will also need time to both learn *and* to plan how to explain to teachers of all content areas how the goals can

be achieved. This work is infinite, but a good start for the year is to allocate 3 to 5 days. An efficient way to work on CCRS is for instructional experts and ILT members to participate in UnboundEd Standards Institute or similarly CCRS-validated intensive professional development together.

September— 4 to 8 hours

The first learning walk should occur as soon as students are back in classrooms. Using the observation tools that the group developed and normed on over the summer, the IEDG members should observe a group of classrooms selected for a particular purpose—e.g. one grade, one subject, new teachers—then follow a protocol that allows all members to collectively share and determine the key levers to begin with in the first coaching cycle. In addition to improving individual coaching skills, learning walks provide data on common school-wide teaching needs that can help inform the ILT on the type of grade level, subject, and/or whole school PD needed in the building. Learning walks typically take 2 to 2.5 hours: 1 to 1.5 hours of classroom observation followed by a 1 hour debrief. Two to three learning walks are recommended in the first month of school.

Set schedule to prioritize instructional work—and stick to it. Time management gurus all agree that the key to success is to live by your calendar. Life in a school can certainly challenge that ambition, however, we have seen that the most effective administrators and teachers are the ones who are extremely strategic, purposeful, and disciplined in how they use their time for core activities.

1. Instructional experts' time should be spent primarily preparing for and facilitating content teams, coaching and observing individual teachers, planning and leading PD sessions, and continuously developing their own knowledge and skills around instruction, curriculum, assessment, and the standards.
2. Instructional experts should plan out their calendars in advance during the previous week, and rely on standing meetings as much as possible, both to minimize the time needed for repeat scheduling and to develop a rhythm and flow to their work. They should also block out their individual work time—to prepare for CPT, arrange observation feedback, study curriculum and standards, and more—to ensure that they have sufficient time for those activities, too.
3. Instructional experts should build discipline over time to stick to their plans. It's important to start and end meetings on-time, to resist interruptions while they're observing instruction, and to protect their work time. This doesn't happen magically and certainly can be made harder when there are bad organizational habits in play, BUT it is something that can be improved with practice. It's also important for the entire IEDG team to commit to these standards and hold each other accountable, as that will create the strongest driver for change throughout the organization.

Key questions for time management:

a.) Content team support

- *Is time consistently blocked out for CPT, ILT, and PD meetings? Is sufficient time, equivalent to the length of the meeting itself, also blocked out to plan for meetings, including data preparation, curriculum and assessment materials management, CCRS study, and curriculum planning? Are there agreed upon structures and templates for this planning work?*

b.) Individual teacher support

- *Have all instructional experts blocked out recurring time in their calendars that is sufficient to observe all teachers for which they are responsible at the target frequency? Do instructional experts have standing meetings with the teachers they coach? Is time also reserved to plan feedback?*

c.) Professional learning facilitation

- *Working backward from each school-wide or team PD, has sufficient time been reserved to plan, refine, and practice and models great instruction? Has this time been effective for helping teachers learn?*
- *Has the schedule been made and has time been allocated to regularly assess and reflect on the effectiveness of the professional learning efforts (via PD, CPT, and coaching), for instance, through teacher feedback and reviewing student data?*

d.) Continuous personal development of knowledge and skills in instruction, curriculum, and assessments

- *Has time to participate in outside or district PD for content areas been reserved?*

Set schedule for IEDG meetings with stated foci and rotations for coaching problems of practice. When you build the IEDG meetings calendar, it's important to determine the focus for each session, including beginning of the year learning walks and norm setting, interim assessments, when formal evaluations are conducted, and when staffing decisions are made. At each IEDG meeting, two or three coaches will describe a coaching situation with a teacher and precisely describe the current challenge that they are facing. Tools such as the Consultancy Protocol and video footage can help to flesh out the evidence that the coach is presenting to help the group learn. In the first meeting, it's often helpful for the principal and other instructional experts with greater experience to model the practice that they want to see throughout the year.

Key Questions:

- *Has the annual schedule been built with the focus noted for each session and sufficient time built in for learning walks to norm observations and planned feedback and to build inter-rater reliability during formal evaluation season across the expert group?*
- *Have all the ILT meetings and your time to plan them with other school staff been built in?*
- *How much time do you need for each consultancy? How many do you want to do in each meeting?*
- *Is there a reason you would want certain instructional experts or subject to be present earlier in the year? Who in your group will develop the schedule for consultancies and by when?*
- *Which protocol are you using? What are norms for problem of practice presentation, such as video?*

Use technology to save time and improve coaching. A key to effective coaching is sustaining the focus on the area of development until improvement is achieved. Most of us have stories of an observer who has watched us teach, provided some feedback, and then “disappeared” for weeks or months. When they return, they often end up focusing on something completely different than the original feedback that they had provided. In the observation and coaching BBP, we noted that feedback from coaches should be provided to teachers regularly, ideally weekly, in bite-sized, actionable chunks and within 24 hours of the observation, because that makes it much easier for teachers to address and implement the suggested changes to their practice.

Technology can help IEDG members commit to these principles, for example, an online template as simple as a Google excel sheet can help members track their coaching efforts. The spreadsheet should include for each teacher, his or her annual goals, the dates of observation and coaching meetings, the feedback with the recommended key actions, and the progress toward implementation. Online templates allow coaches to easily refer to their data, to note trends, and to share patterns with peers. This method also saves time because coaches are not each inventing their own tracking systems.

Another piece of technology that can enhance coaching is the use of video, both to support evidence-based coaching and to provide flexibility in scheduling. When video is used to record observations, it can:

- be used by the coach and the teacher to concretely identify specific growth areas and to analyze the teacher’s progress toward meeting them;

- enable the teacher to record her or himself for self-analysis, and to share that video with coaches and peers for additional feedback;
- enable coaches to virtually observe their teachers' lessons if, for some reason, they are unable to attend in person;
- be used in IEDG meetings to help norm members on "what we see" and the type of feedback that should be provided.

Key Questions:

- *Do you have a simple-to-use online template that all coaches can use? What training or modeling is need to ensure everyone can use it?*
- *What accountability mechanisms should you build in to ensure full participation?*
- *What will be your protocols be around the use of video?*



MONEY: Note implications for Budget and Staffing and Annual Professional Learning Plan

Allocate funds to pay for PD support to experts in target content areas and/or in discipline of effective coaching—may be to outside providers or to additional district-provided resources.

- *How much do people, programs, and coaching curriculum/ materials cost?*

Allocate funds/resources for technology support for coaching, such as online system to track feedback and video.

- *How much do resources cost? What are the free alternatives that are almost as good?*

IMPLEMENTATION: POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

Now that you've arranged your resources to develop instructional experts, here are some ideas for what happens in observation and coaching, professional learning, and team meetings.

1. Start with the Common Core Knowledge and Practice Survey ([Survey Resources](#)) to allow IEDG members to assess their CCRS expertise objectively and to demonstrate humility and a growth mindset right from the start. The Knowledge and Practice Survey is a tool for educators to reflect on their instructional practice and understanding of the Common Core and is meant to spark conversation, identify areas for growth, and offer concrete ways for teams of teachers to continue to align their practice to the Shifts. Ideas for use are below—both options can also be facilitated in the ILT:

- Instructional experts who share content and grade bands take the survey together (its versions are by content area and grade bands) and then discuss the results and plan for using the Student Achievement Partners resources (www.achievethecore.org) to work on their growth areas.
- The IEDG may also decide that it wants to build more understanding of a common content area, such as literacy, so that instructional experts can better support teachers of all subjects in important elements of literacy development.

2. Identify your resources to kick off the observation and coaching function of your IEDG with focused PD to before the beginning of school.

- Again, *Leverage Leadership* is a tremendous resource as it includes a DVD with the session's PowerPoint presentation, video clips to study and norm on a facilitator's guide, and all the handouts (case studies, trackers, templates, you name it).
- Another strong resource is [Designing Powerful Professional Development for Teachers and Principals by Dennis Sparks](#). This highlights of this resource include Setting the Stage for Powerful Professional Learning, Providing a context for Professional Learning, Developing School leaders and teachers, and Getting to the Heart of the Matter in Professional Development.
- Accompany both with a content- and grade band-specific CCRS observation tool such as the Instructional Practice Guide [IPG](#) to keep all your tools and conversation aligned and focused. The IPG asks questions about the math and literacy being learned and the text being taught. Coaches need to know whether that is the right content, and more importantly, how to see whether the teacher is being effective and ensuring the students have mastered that content.

3. Use a great guide for coaching and professional learning practice. There are many good sources for coaching, including Elena Aguilar’s *The Art of Coaching* and Paul Bambrick-Santoyo’s *Leverage Leadership*, that the team can read, discuss, and decide how to implement in the school. *Leverage Leadership*, for instance, has detail-rich chapters on...

“Observation and Feedback” that has:

- A video clip of effective feedback during a coaching session
- Core Ideas of observation and feedback to consider
- Examples of systems to put in place to support frequent observations

“Professional Development” that has:

- A video clip of the *Living the Learning Framework* that drives the professional development session
- Ideas on What to teach and how to choose the content of PD
- How to build better PD objectives so as support staff growth in teaching and learning that will, in turn, promote student achievement

4. Divide into smaller groups to focus on specific areas including...

- Studying the major work by grade in Literacy and Math to deepen understanding of the progressions and coherence required. Use resources from Student Achievement Partners www.achievethecore.org.
- Review Unit, Lesson Plans, and Resources using the [Equip](#) rubric
- Share and analyze artifacts from CPT. We know from work in the field that the process of creation is key to adult learning. Magic happens when teachers or coaches actually create something for use in instruction in the classroom, whether it’s a lesson’s worth of text-dependent questions focused on a specific text, or a text set designed to build knowledge, or end-of-unit set of math assessment items.

5. Delve into data-driven instruction. Explore resources including...

- *Driven by Data and Leverage Leadership*
- Datawise
- Partnership with the Achievement Network

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Conversations at IEDG meetings focus on what teachers are doing rather than on what IEDG members are doing	Ensure that meetings have clear agendas and use protocols and enforce norms in order to maintain a focus on the learning of the group.
Coaching is not focused on specific practices or strategies	Set clear goals for each coaching cycle with agreed upon “look fors” that will serve to monitor progress towards those goals.
Instructional experts are not receiving ongoing observation and feedback about their work	In developing coaching case loads the school leader must take into account the need for providing on-going observation and feedback to the instructional experts. Time management must prioritize this function over others.
Feedback from IEDG members is not calibrated	Include regular opportunities for IEDG members to observe and debrief instruction together, norming on feedback. Individual IEDG members share written feedback for discussion using a tuning protocol.

District-Level Enabling Conditions

The below are best practices for districts supporting CCRS-aligned instructional improvements in their schools. However, the recommendations of this BBP are designed for application at the school level despite regardless of the level of district support.

1. A CCRS objective-focused district instructional vision, and connected professional learning plan and support structures that integrate centrally-provided group PD with school-level CPT and observation and coaching cycles.
2. District leaders and instructional experts; including curriculum, assessment, and coaching staff; who have had their expertise validated against the college and career-ready standards for the subject and grade levels they are supporting.
3. Professional learning resources (written/online texts, observation tools, videos, rubrics and/or people) that have been research/field-validated for coaching and college and career-ready standards expertise for the target subjects and grade levels.
4. High quality, CCRS-aligned curriculum and assessments made available to schools as a foundation for teaching and coaching efforts.

5. Lateral communication and development systems in central office to ensure deep alignment between professional learning supports and curriculum and assessments.
6. (Where applicable) Teachers union leadership and district leadership have a common understanding of the value of teacher leaders in the role of instructional experts.

Design Interactions

Strategic school designs have many interconnected components. Well-designed IEDGs should be integrated with the following design essentials:

- Adult Culture
- Talent Management and Teacher Leadership

Summary of Resources

- **Knowledge and Practice Survey (SAP):** <http://achievethecore.org/page/1104/common-core-knowledge-and-practice-survey>
- **Instructional Practice Guides (SAP):** <http://achievethecore.org/category/1155/printable-versions>
- ***The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice*** (The Series on School Reform) 2003, by Joseph P. McDonald, Nancy Mohr, Alan Dichter, Elizabeth C. McDonald.
- **UnboundEd:** <https://www.unbounded.org/>
- **The Together Group:** <http://www.thetogethergroup.com/>

Sincere thanks to the reviewers for ERS Coaching and Instructional Development tools:

Mary Driscoll, Boston Public Schools
Toby Romer, Newton Public Schools

Instructional Expert Development Group at Queens Metropolitan High School

NEW YORK, NY

“We had to kind of reboot everything, from student culture, to staff culture, to how we learn, to how we teach ... it wasn’t (the case) that our teachers were bad. They just didn’t have the right structures and systems and expectations.”

—Principal Greg Dutton

Context: Queens Metropolitan High School is a diverse urban high school serving 1,100 students in the New York City borough of Queens. When Greg Dutton became principal in 2012, only 62 percent of students at the new school were on track to graduate. Tension between the teachers and the school’s previous leadership team had also created a weak and distrustful staff culture. A key focus area for Principal Dutton was on transforming the staff culture by emphasizing the importance of measuring results and of providing and receiving actionable feedback, through the school’s new Instructional Expert Development Group (IEDG) and coaching cycle model.

KEY COMPONENTS

1. Articulate a shared instructional vision.

The IEDG and observation and coaching cycle model was introduced to the staff as a key component of the school’s professional learning system and significant time was invested in rolling out the program to ensure staff buy-in.

2. Allocate time for IEDG members to deepen their subject- and grade-specific expertise and their coaching skills.

Each IEDG member is responsible for a core subject area (Math, ELA + Special Education, Science, and Social Studies), to ensure that each observer is in a strong position to provide content-specific feedback. The IEDG sets aside two days during the summer and one team meeting a month specifically to discuss the coaching cycle model and to norm on how to give constructive, actionable feedback. Every quarter, Principal Dutton also accompanies each IEDG member on three observation and feedback meetings, in order to provide direct feedback to each individual.

3. Use technology to save time and improve coaching.

IEDG members use video cameras and iPhones to record some of their own observation and feedback sessions, which are then reviewed during full-team IEDG meetings to provide each observer with feedback and suggestions on how to improve.

4. Invest in external coaching curricula and expertise to improve IEDG member skills.

In the first year of the coaching cycle model, IEDG members taped themselves during their coaching sessions and sent the recordings to Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, author of *Driven by Data, Leverage Leadership & Great Habits, Great Readers* and former Chief Schools Officer at Uncommon Schools, to receive feedback on their coaching skills.

LEARNING FROM IMPLEMENTATION

Importance of developing and modeling a growth mindset: Principal Dutton and his IEDG recognized the importance of applying the same principles of regular observation, feedback, and adjustment to their own work, and modeling their commitment to continuous learning to the entire staff. They created anonymous surveys to allow teachers to provide feedback on their coaches, and instituted frequent check-points to gather broader feedback from the teachers about the usefulness of the Coaching Cycle model. For example, teachers expressed interest in receiving more content feedback (e.g., feedback around the tasks and activities that they were giving students), instead of just the instructional practice feedback (e.g., feedback on what the teacher was doing) that they had been receiving. As a result, the IEDG adjusted their approach to provide a better balance of both types of feedback.

RESULTS

In 2014, two years after Principal Dutton arrived at Queens Metro, the school's four-year graduation rate rose to 89%, which was 20 points above the New York City average and 18 points above the Queens borough average. Queens Metro students were also significantly outperforming their peers across the city on the state Regents examinations, for example, Earth Science Regents passing rates had increased from 58% proficient to 80% proficient. In 2015, *U.S. News and World Report* awarded Queens Metropolitan High School a Bronze medal in its national ranking of the best high schools in America.

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