

Building Block Profiles

A Brief Introduction

Collaborative Work & Professional Growth

1. Instructional Expert Development Group

<http://bit.ly/2hKq3wC>

Typically, the IEDG is a subset of the broader Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and is focused explicitly on building the capacity of those who play coaching roles in the school.

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. *See our Building Block Profile for more information.*

2. Sustained and Integrated Observation and Coaching Cycles

<http://bit.ly/2hKvcF0>

In an effective observation and coaching cycle, an instructional expert regularly observes teachers as they deliver instruction and provides timely, actionable feedback and support until proficiency in a target skill is consistently observed. Ideally, the instructional experts who facilitate the observation and coaching cycles have demonstrated expertise in a specific subject and grade band in the context of college and career ready standards and are often also responsible for facilitating professional development and collaborative planning time (CPT) at the school.

While some may consider “coaches” and “administrators” as distinct roles, schools should consider all available resources. This may include using a combination of full or part-time coaches and teacher leaders, as well as the support of school administrators and other teacher evaluators.

3. Shared-Content Teaching Teams

<http://bit.ly/2hKoWwX>

Shared-content teaching teams are comprised of teachers who teach a common grade-subject combination (or, at the high school level, course). Their collaboration meets the following objectives: 1) develop lesson plans focused on a common curriculum or text as well as long-term unit plans, 2) develop common formative assessments and analyze results, 3) determine how to adjust instruction in response to student progress, 4) participate in learning on common areas for development. Teachers also collaborate on how to regroup students for targeted, small group support and work together to develop individualized interventions.

4. Data Driven Instruction (DDI) to Improve Teaching and Learning <http://bit.ly/2hAeBRi>

For DDI, teachers work with peers who share the same grade- and subject-based content so they can plan backwards from common standards and analyze the results of common assessments. Teams have a designated meeting facilitator to ensure that CPT adheres to clear agendas and decision-making protocols in order to maximize participants' time and effect. As much as possible, expertise should be balanced across teams. Outside of CPT, teachers ideally have access to expert support—and these experts have opportunities to observe teachers implementing instructional adjustments for coaching, and to identify common areas of development for the teaching team.

An external vendor or the district will need to provide rigorous interim assessments and easy-to-read data reports if staff do not have the time or expertise to develop them in-house. Typically, the vendor who provides professional development in DDI can also be contracted to provide the assessments and data reports.

School Community & Social-Emotional Support

1. School-Wide Values, Expectations, and Routines <http://bit.ly/2hSnAMG>

A school-wide system of values sets the foundation for a community of shared expectations for the behavior of both students and adults. These values, expectations, and routines do not replace the role of a more formal social-emotional curriculum, but can be used to reinforce and complement it. School-wide values also underpin common behavior systems which guide how rewards and consequences are administered across classrooms. Consistent routines explicitly taught also help foster a sense of belonging to the broader school community, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels.

Establishing school-wide values, expectations, and routines takes time and attention. This commitment of resources results in a consistent and predictable environment that yields benefits for students with known disabilities, as well as those with “invisible” disabilities such as trauma.

2. Research-Based SEL Curriculum

A research-based curriculum provides school staff with consistent language and content to teach students to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relational skills, and responsible decision-making. When regularly taught in every classroom and integrated into general school practices, the SEL curriculum supports a vertically aligned positive, safe school culture.

Building a successful SEL curriculum requires the following key components: 1) curriculum taught at least weekly in every classroom and grade, 2) CPT and PD time allocated for adults to learn the curriculum and reflect on its implementation, 3) staff “owners” of the curriculum, its PD and materials for teachers, and continuous improvement of its implementation with students, and 4) school leadership champions and observes for quality implementation and effect.

3. Advisory

<http://bit.ly/2gPMO0u>

When implemented effectively, advisory can deepen personal relationships within the school community to help students feel known. This feeling of being known by adults and other students in the school can dramatically increase students' academic success.

Building successful advisory programs requires the following building block components: 1) deliberate student and teacher assignment to advisory groups, aligned to the program's purpose(s) and ideally in ratios of 16:1 or less, 2) a high-quality curriculum to ensure advisory time is used well, 3) dedicated time for advisory groups to meet, matched to the curriculum and approach, 4) start-up professional learning opportunities that prepare advisors to facilitate advisory effectively, and 5) clearly defined outcome measures and collaborative planning time for advisors to monitor student progress, problem-solve, and review future advisory sessions.

Access and Intervention

1. Targeted and Flexible Intervention Blocks

<http://bit.ly/2hAjkW>

Targeted and flexible intervention blocks ensure there is dedicated time in the schedule during which students are flexibly grouped to receive remediation or enrichment. Group size and curriculum often vary across student groups based on need. Students have regular opportunities throughout the school year to switch into different groups during the block depending on how their needs evolve over time. Tier 2 and 3 levels of support are included in this type of targeted and flexible structure. Individual and collaborative planning is required to assess and regroup students, and plan intervention lessons.

2. Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS)

All students receive universal, targeted, school-wide supports, which are sufficient for most to improve their academic growth. For students who do not make the expected growth, the general education teacher works with the MTSS team to develop targeted, individual-specific interventions for those students.

Key components include: 1) time in the schedule to implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, 2) data systems to collect/display data that is easy to use/actionable, 3) regularly time in teams to review student data and track progress from a variety of sources, 4) support staff (e.g. social workers) involved in MTSS meetings, 5) time for facilitators to adequately prep meetings, 6) parents/guardians involved in the entire MTSS process, and 7) an assigned manager for MTSS.

3. Extended Core Subject Blocks with or without Push-In Support

General education teachers receive more time in core subjects to facilitate learning in small groups differentiated by proficiency levels. If specialists and other staff are available, they may push into these classes.

Key components include: 1) the school decides which are priority subjects to dedicate more time to, 2) students receive remediation or enrichment related to specific challenges or extension



areas, 3) teacher may require additional professional learning support to plan small groups and centers and for classroom management, 4) student and teacher groupings change frequently based on formative and interim data, and 5) technology can further lower group size and target content to student need.