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# Make a plan, then revise it

**Q** How do you plan your work to accomplish your school's goals?

The first year, it was very difficult to write a plan because we were the very first coaches. We didn't have any model. I did create a plan, but once I started coaching and found out what the job was really about, I didn't follow a lot of that plan because it wasn't applicable to the needs of my school. The next year, I had more insight as to what the school needed and what the teachers needed and wanted. So I was a lot more successful.

It's important to do an informal assessment of the school and its needs — start with the data and where the school needs to go. Look at the school plan to see what's in place already so that you're not duplicating something or trying to launch something very new when teachers have 100 other things to do. Sit with the principal. Joellen Killion has a book that we have used as a bible — *Taking the Lead: New Roles for*

*Teachers and School-Based Coaches* (NSDC, 2006). We looked at those roles and decided which ones we thought we would be taking at which points in time.

Creating a plan, or a contract, with the principal is definitely important because it gives you an idea where you're going and is an opportunity to dialogue with your principal, to see if where you think you need to be going is where your principal sees you, because ultimately she is the leader of the school.

Try to come up with a structure in the beginning, and then revise it as you go along. If you plan on using the data — and not just the tests, but what you've collected in terms of what teachers need, what students need — then you have to have a vision of where you want to go. You need to know where you're going from the very start.

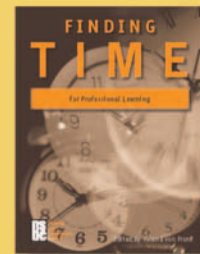
Coaching is like any other job. You don't know until you actually get in there. It doesn't matter how many books you read or what anybody tells you, you have to see for yourself. ♦



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