

Chapter 6: Hiring and placing coaches

	TOOL	PURPOSE
6.1	Teacher on special assignment/ elementary instructional coach job description	Use this sample job description as a guide when advertising for an elementary instructional coach.
6.2	High school language arts instructional coach job description and responsibilities	Examine the responsibilities of a high school language arts instructional coach based on this district's example.
6.3	Instructional coach job description	Consider using Michigan's job description for instructional coaches hired through a Title I accountability grant as a guide for your own job description.
6.4	GEAR UP coach planning template	Study this template in which GEAR UP coaches describe their roles.
6.5	Elementary school instructional coach interview questions	Use these sample questions and indicators of potential when interviewing elementary school instructional coach candidates.
6.6	Middle school instructional coach interview questions	Use these sample questions and indicators of potential when interviewing middle school instructional coach candidates.
6.7	Middle school instructional coach written interview questions	Use this sample questionnaire to obtain a writing sample from coach candidates.
6.8	Proposed process for coach placement	Take steps to place coach candidates in school positions.

TOOL 6.1**Teacher on special assignment/elementary instructional coach job description**

This position will involve implementing curricula and assessments. In addition, a focus of this position is supporting and promoting effective instructional practices. The individual in this position will work in a variety of settings to improve teacher instruction that ultimately will increase student achievement.

PRESCREENING CRITERIA: Applicants are required to submit the following documents to be considered for an interview. These items must be submitted to C. White, in the Department for Learning and Educational Achievement, before the posted deadline.

1. Resume addressing:
 - a. A minimum of five years successful teaching experience
 - b. Demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a team
 - c. List of professional organizations and sources of information you use to keep current
 - d. Three references
2. Letter of introduction explaining:
 - a. Training and knowledge in the area of coaching
 - b. Previous successful experience working with adult learners and experience working with instructional coach(es)
 - c. Vision for coach work and staff development
 - d. Awareness, understanding, and application of CAP (Curriculum Alignment Project)
 - e. Previous experience or current thinking about culturally responsive teaching that relates to achievement issues for all students

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS (as demonstrated in application process):

1. Valid Colorado teaching license or certificate
2. Minimum of five years of successful teaching experience
3. Demonstrated classroom implementation of best practices and instructional strategies with an emphasis in the areas of reading, writing, and math
4. Demonstrated knowledge of data analysis and data-driven instructional planning
5. Demonstrated success in working with adult learners
6. Demonstrated strong leadership skills
7. Demonstrated ability to consult with and facilitate groups

TOOL 6.1 cont'd

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Advanced degree or comparable experience in content
- Successful teaching experience in this district
- Ability to work and/or support work across all grade levels K-12
- English as a second language endorsement (for ESL schools)
- Master's degree in literacy or advanced training in literacy instruction (for Title 1 schools)
- Ability to work with others across content areas on Department for Learning and Educational Achievement and Division of Instruction projects
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to use standard district technology effectively and efficiently for a variety of purposes
- Willingness to learn new technology
- Ability to help others make sense of and adjust to change
- Demonstrated flexibility and capacity for dealing with ambiguity
- Ability to manage multiple projects and meet deadlines
- Willingness to work a flexible schedule, school day, and school year
- Demonstrated ability in interpreting assessment data collected from a variety of sources
- Current staff development involvement in instruction and curriculum includes relevant and connected experiences
- Willingness to be a contributing member of the Department for Learning and Educational Achievement as an instructional coach
- Willingness to successfully implement all relevant parts of the strategic plan
- Willingness to plan and implement professional development — including inservices, classes, and collaborative models — for individual teachers, teams, schools, articulation areas, and districtwide

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Partner with principals, individual teachers, school sites, and articulation areas to implement new and existing curricula and assessments
- Support and implement district initiatives
- Develop and teach inservices and workshops

TOOL 6.1 cont'd

- Develop, coordinate, and support induction for new teachers
- Communicate with district-level administrators, principals, and teachers through a variety of means
- Work with Assessment and Research, Exceptional Student Services, and Multicultural Student Services, among other central departments in the Division of Instruction
- Participate in ongoing personal professional development experiences as a means of enhancing the instructional, intervention, and assessment support provided to teachers. This includes participation in Cognitive Coaching and Adaptive Schools (foundational skills required of all Department of Learning, Evaluation, and Assessment personnel)
- Establish trust, rapport, and credibility with entire school community
- Facilitate conversations with individual teachers, grade-level teams, whole staffs, and other groups
- Work with other instructional coaches as necessary

Source: Jeffco (Jefferson County, CO) Public Schools.

TOOL 6.2**High school language arts instructional coach job description and responsibilities****JOB DESCRIPTION:**

The high school language arts instructional coach will work toward supporting grades 9-12 language arts teachers to implement new instructional resources producing the following results:

- Build teacher capacity in using new language arts print and online resources
- Build teacher capacity in creating quality formative and summative assessments and analyzing student results to inform instruction
- Build teacher capacity in assisting students to achieve the power learning targets
- Lead curriculum writers in grades 9-12 in developing and aligning professional learning team targets with curriculum, secondary education, building principals, and the director of instructional resources.

SUPERVISORS:

The high school language arts instructional coach's support, supervision, and evaluation is a collaborative effort by the director of secondary education, building principals, and the director of instructional resources.

WORK ASSIGNMENTS:

The high school language arts instructional coach will be hired, placed, and monitored at the discretion of the assistant superintendent for instruction in consultation with the director of secondary education and the building principals. The high school language arts instructional coach will agree to a two-year work commitment. Examples of job responsibilities include the following roles and descriptions:

Role of CURRICULUM SPECIALIST: (To ensure implementation of adopted curriculum)

- Work with teachers to align the written, taught, and tested curriculum
- Lead curriculum writing projects to identify professional learning teams' big ideas and essential questions, and to develop pacing guides
- Work with teachers to develop appropriate formative and summative assessments for the professional learning teams
- Collaboratively work to deepen teachers' content and process knowledge in language arts

Role of INSTRUCTIONAL COACH: (To ensure teachers implement effective research-based instructional strategies)

- Help teachers select and implement the most appropriate instructional strategies

TOOL 6.2 cont'd

- Plan with teachers, demonstrate lessons, co-teach, observe teaching/learning, and provide feedback
- Help teachers design and implement technology-supported differentiated instruction
- Facilitate data discussions that focus on transferring new knowledge into classroom practice

Role of CLASSROOM SUPPORTER: (To provide support, feedback, and reflection)

- Provide support to individual classroom teachers by modeling, co-teaching, observing, and providing feedback
- Provide ongoing training and support to ensure teachers use research-based best practices
- Research language arts academic interventions for use in Response to Intervention and share findings for possible action research projects
- Serve as a skilled resource to staff in the use of technology to enhance learning

Role of a DATA COACH: (Using data to improve instruction)

- Lead and facilitate focused collaborative data teams to analyze student data efficiently and effectively
- Collaborate with principal and other teachers in the building to analyze findings to target professional development needs for individual teachers and/or departments

EXPECTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TIME COMMITMENTS:

- Attend School Improvement Camp June 9 and Aug. 16 to work with assigned building in developing school improvement goals and plans
- Attend the *Using Data and Getting Results: Improving Student Achievement through Collaborative Inquiry* workshop (date TBD) (This is tentative.)
- Attend the Learning Forward Instructional Coaching Academy in Fargo throughout the school year (This is a six-day commitment with the first two days taking place Aug. 17 and 18.)
- Attend collaboration meetings as scheduled with the director of secondary education, principals, and the director of instructional resources
- Meet biweekly or as scheduled with the director of secondary education and other instructional coaches
- Serve on district committees/task forces as an ad-hoc member when appropriate
- Summarize work on a weekly basis and communicate this to all staff (e.g. section of principal's SharePoint site, newsletter, or staff email)
- Help principals provide building-level professional development if requested

TOOL 6.2 cont'd

- Assist with district-level professional development
- Learn how to use and apply the district-adopted electronic tools and resources that are specific to language arts

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Willingness to take initiative and self-start
- Ability to clearly communicate with others — in written, interpersonal, and verbal formats
- A minimum of five years of successful teaching experience
- A master's degree in English is preferred
- Ability to maintain the confidentiality of schools, teachers, and classrooms
- Willingness to learn how to use assessment results to guide instruction
- Knowledge of research and best practices in instructional design and differentiating instruction
- Demonstrated ability to use technology and willingness to teach others
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a team and solve problems collaboratively
- Demonstrated effective group presentation and facilitation skills
- Willingness to learn new skills
- Understand research on effective instructional strategies and know how to align instruction with content
- Understand how to make connections between language arts and other content areas

WORK YEAR:

The high school language arts instructional coach will be a 60% position shared among high school sites with some summer days expected

Source: Fargo (ND) Public Schools.

TOOL 6.3**Instructional coach job description****POSITION DESCRIPTION:**

The instructional coach is a key component of the Title I Accountability Grant as part of the SSOS. The coach will provide support for implementation fidelity of evidence-based interventions and will spend the majority of time working in classrooms with teachers (e.g. modeling, observing, co-teaching). The coach will play a strong role in analyzing and using student achievement data to impact instructional decision making. The focus of the coach's work is to help teachers learn to use data for instructional planning that will have a positive impact on student achievement. The coach may facilitate teacher study groups in which they analyze student work and lesson plans and plan for the enhancement of instructional strategies. The coach's analysis of student work and teaching and learning data will inform what occurs during coaching sessions with individual teachers and in the teacher study groups. *The instructional coach's role is nonsupervisory.* The coach's role is separate and apart from the evaluative role of the principal or supervisor of the teacher.

SPECIFIC TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Participating in all required coach professional development. The coach is charged with acquiring the knowledge, skills, technology skills, and instructional strategies necessary to effectively impact the instructional practices of the teachers that are coached.
- The coach must remain knowledgeable about current and past research in the specific content area and other pedagogies relevant to the coaching role.
- The coach must develop deep content and pedagogical knowledge in the evidence-based intervention in use.
- The coach identifies school teaching and learning needs, barriers, and weaknesses by analyzing student data and organizing and implementing problem-solving actions with teachers.
- The coach facilitates school-based professional development, working with teachers (in teams or individually) to refine their knowledge and skills. Professional development could include, but not be limited to: in-class coaching, observing, modeling of instructional strategies, guiding teachers in looking at student work, developing lesson plans with teachers based on student needs, supporting data analysis, supporting the integration of technology, co-planning with teachers, etc.
- The coach monitors instructional effectiveness and student progress using tools and strategies gained through professional development.
- The coach builds and maintains confidential relationships with teachers. The conversations and interactions that the coach has with teachers must always remain confidential so that a high level of trust is created and maintained between the teacher and the coach. Exceptions to this include imminent physical or psychological danger to the students.

TOOL 6.3 cont'd

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

- Ability to work well with people, and demonstrate and maintain productive and positive interpersonal skills.
- Deep content and pedagogical knowledge in math or English language arts.
- Knowledge and experience using a variety of assessment tools and analyzing student data.
- Demonstrated success in communicating effectively with teachers, principals, parents, students, and paraprofessionals.
- Ability to develop educator capacity, implement practices of collaborative inquiry, and build sustainability.
- Demonstrated ability to network and connect to resources.
- Knowledge and experience using a coaching process with other teachers.
- Ability to work with teachers in a way that improves student learning:
 - Ability to manage multiple projects effectively.
 - Ability to manage time and schedules flexibly and in a way that maximizes teacher learning.
 - Ability to think flexibly and to adapt work to the needs of teachers.
 - Knowledge of the change process and ability to help teachers make sense of change.
- Ability to work with teams to develop goals for improving student achievement.
- Demonstrated teacher leadership skills.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- A valid Michigan teaching certificate.
- A minimum of five years successful teaching experience in math or English language arts.
- Previous successful experience coaching adult learners.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively as a part of a team.

TO APPLY:

Please submit evidence of the above and a one- to two-page resume containing *three references*. Also required is a one-page essay describing how you might begin work as a coach in a school. The content of the essay should align with the premises of coaching and the underlying beliefs of a professional learning community. The essay will be scored as part of the pre-screening criteria.

Source: Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators.

TOOL 6.4

GEAR UP coach planning template

GEAR UP coaches are responsible for helping the administration implement three GEAR UP objectives:

1. Improve academic performance of GEAR UP students
2. Increase numbers of students in rigorous classes
3. Improve high school graduation rates

GEAR UP coaches are responsible for helping the administration implement five GEAR UP activity categories:

1. Professional development
2. Curriculum improvements
3. Tutoring
4. Mentoring
5. Summer academies

Listed in the chart below under Instructional Coach are the 10 roles of school-based coaches (Killion & Harrison, 2006). Descriptions in **BLUE Italic** are directly from the GEAR UP coach job description.

GEAR UP COACH PLANNING TEMPLATE (2006-07)		
Our mutual rating (1-5)	2007-08 deliverables PRINCIPAL: How I will support this role	2007-08 deliverables COACH: How I will fulfill this role
INSTRUCTIONAL COACH		
Data coach — <i>Interpreting Texas Education Agency and Adequate Yearly Progress accountability reports, working with building leadership teams to design continuous improvement models responsive to that data, study benchmark results, etc.</i>		

TOOL 6.4 cont'd

<p>Classroom supporter — Working with teachers by providing a continuum of support that intends to build capacity and a gradual release of responsibility. Coaches can model/demonstrate, co-teach or observe, and give feedback on instruction and management</p>		
<p>School leader — <i>Providing leadership and coaching training for department chairs, counselors, and teacher leaders</i></p>		
<p>Resource provider — Sharing instructional resources, websites, materials, tools, etc., with teachers</p>		
<p>Mentor — Supporting selected new teachers or teachers in need of extra assistance as assigned by the principal</p>		
<p>Learning facilitator — <i>Working with building administrators, teacher leaders, and staff to create a coherent approach to staff development that is responsive to building needs, district initiatives, observation protocols, and the goals stated above</i></p>		
<p>Instructional specialist — <i>Assisting in developing a culture around teacher collaboration that results in integrated learning (e.g. librarians teaching research in all subjects, reading and writing across the curriculum, integrated hands-on math and science, etc.)</i></p>		
<p>Curriculum specialist — <i>Coordinating and/or providing training that supports reading, math, writing, and science in alignment with district and state initiatives and other curriculum issues</i></p>		

TOOL 6.4 cont'd

<p>Catalyst for change — <i>Assisting each campus in moving from a remediation paradigm for English language learners and special education students to an acceleration model</i></p> <p><i>Working with the administration to develop a building-specific schedule that creates time for teacher collaboration to promote team cohesiveness and academic success</i></p>		
<p>Learner — <i>Attending training such as that provided by Learning Forward and Project GRAD in order to more effectively develop teacher leaders on campus</i></p>		
GEAR UP SPECIFICS		
<p>Surveys — <i>Administering GEAR UP surveys as required for the annual performance report</i></p>		
<p>Mentoring — <i>Coordinating mentoring provided by business partners, PG scholars, Parent Pals, and high school students planning to major in education</i></p>		
<p>Tutoring — <i>Coordinating tutoring, both volunteer and teacher-based; focusing on tutoring to accelerate students into algebra and pre-AP classes</i></p>		
<p>Increasing pre-AP numbers — GEAR UP goal</p>		
<p>Summer programs — <i>Coordinating summer transition academies, including at least one college tour for both students and parents</i></p>		

Source: Laurie Ballering, Project GRAD, Houston, Texas.

TOOL 6.5**Elementary school instructional coach interview questions**

Directions: As you interview candidates for the coaching job, listen for the points listed below each question. Each aligns with the expectations for coaches and their work.

1. How will you build a strong partnership with your principal in order to ensure teacher learning is effectively facilitated and leads to increased student achievement?
 - Rapport, relationships, trust, respect, collaboration
 - Use of data — school, grade-level, classroom
 - Consistent and effective communication, shared vision
 - Follow through, monitor, and adjust
 - Active listening, paraphrasing
 - Establish structures, systems, norms, confidentiality
 - Ask questions that push thinking

2. One of the primary areas of work for an instructional coach is to help teachers build their capacity and increase their ability to meet student needs. To accomplish this, an instructional coach must be able to identify the essential components of quality instruction. With that in mind, please discuss the following;
 - a. What would you define as best practices in literacy instruction?
 - b. What would you define as best practices in math instruction?
 - c. What specific techniques will you use to help teachers develop their skills in these two specific content areas?
 - English language learner-specific strategies, cultural competency
 - Multiple modalities, differentiation
 - I do, you do, we do, gradual release
 - Modeled, shared, guided, independent
 - Team teaching, co-teaching
 - Professional learning communities, purposeful use of data, formative and summative assessments
 - Monitor, adjust, intentional planning, use of district curriculum

TOOL 6.5 cont'd

3. As a coach, how will you work to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps?
Please be as specific as possible.
 - Data analysis, progress monitor, Response to Intervention
 - Data teams, data walks, kid talks, professional learning communities
 - Unified Improvement Plan, root cause analysis, collaboration
 - Use of acuity, Yearly Progress Pro, purposeful use of data
 - Focus on adult behaviors, knowledge of teacher as learner
 - Goal setting, knowledge of student as learner, adjust instruction
 - English language learners, special education students, gifted collaboration, cultural diversity

4. Teachers in your building will have various skill levels and different needs in regard to support and professional development. How will you determine the focus of your work and the strategies you will use when differentiating your work with adult learners?
 - Professional learning communities, positive presuppositions, use of data, Unified Improvement Plan
 - Collaboration, communication, five States of Mind
 - Build relationships, trust, work side-by-side, respect
 - Change process
 - Model, co-teach, know your teachers, differentiate

5. Please discuss the skills and dispositions (personality traits) that will ensure you are a successful instructional coach. Why are you the right person for this job?
 - Lifelong learner, risk-taker, resourceful, problem solver, collaborator, leader
 - Listener, flexible, sense-maker, reflective, open minded, emotionally intelligent
 - Confidence, credible, follow through, initiative, passion, relationships, respectful

Source: Jeffco (Jefferson County, CO) Public Schools.

TOOL 6.6**Middle school instructional coach interview questions**

Directions: As you interview candidates for the coaching job, listen for the points listed below each question. Each aligns with the expectations for coaches and their work.

Name: _____

Interviewer: _____

1. Talk about the role of an instructional coach working with teachers and how you see teaching and student achievement improving as a result. Describe your experiences working with the instructional coach at your school.

Follow-up question: If you have not worked with your instructional coach, tell us why you have not.

- Importance of collegiality, adult learning theory and strong communication skills, rapport, relationships
 - Reflective practitioner
 - Use of data for instructional decisions, increased understanding of best practices in instruction
 - Intentional planning
 - Best practices
 - Change agent
2. As a coach, how will you work to close achievement gaps?
 - Culturally responsive culture and classroom
 - Positive relationships, understands the importance of relationships
 - High expectations
 - Parent involvement, understanding culture
 - Data analysis to identify gaps
 - Identify broad spectrum: special education to gifted
 - Problem-solving teams
 - Response to Intervention rubric
 - Support all students
 - Adjust classroom instruction

TOOL 6.6 cont'd

3. At times, veteran and new teachers have different needs in regard to the support and professional development an instructional coach provides. How will you determine the focus of your work and the strategies you will use when working with different types of adult learners?
 - Understands teaching/learning cycle
 - Use of data to drive instructional decisions, assesses teacher needs
 - Recognizes the importance of intentional planning, ongoing process
 - Incorporates variety of strategies and uses differentiated grouping
 - Environment of learning
 - Managing change
 - Positive presuppositions/relationship building
 - Trust and rapport

4. How will you build a partnership with your principal in order to ensure teacher learning is effectively facilitated and leads to increased student achievement?
 - Needs assessment with staff, examine school data and urgent challenges
 - Staff development committee, professional development rubric
 - Importance of collaboration, trust and rapport, visibility and availability
 - School goals tied to accreditation plan, tied to district goals
 - Ongoing, job-embedded components of quality professional development
 - Regular meetings
 - Working with building leadership team
 - Relationship building
 - Coach takes initiative to do the work

5. What is your role in ensuring teachers use the district's curriculum as the foundation for instructional planning?
 - Coach observations, collect trend data in regard to what implementation looks like, and define next steps
 - Use of some curriculum vocabulary (essential learning; pacing guides; planning templates; Know, Understand, Demonstrate)
 - Use is non-negotiable

TOOL 6.6 cont'd

- Full understanding of the curriculum design
 - Monitor use in order to provide professional development
6. This question has three parts:
- a. What does literacy mean in a 21st-century educational system?
 - b. Discuss effective instructional strategies in literacy across all content areas.
 - c. What specific techniques will you use to help teachers develop their skill set and incorporate these skills into their classroom instruction?
 - Knows a variety of reading, writing, and math strategies, student engagement levels
 - Knowledge of NCTM- and NCTE-based current research
 - Integrates reading, writing, and math with each other and in content
 - Assesses students' needs and differentiates instruction
 - Knowledge of state standards, grade-level expectations
 - Coaching techniques, build teacher capacity
 - Teaching/learning cycle
 - Guiding principles
7. Imagine you are sitting down with team or department to look at student achievement data (Acuity, Read 180 report, common assessment, etc.). Their students haven't performed well, and they start making excuses: "The test is assessing things that we haven't even covered yet;" "These kids are so low — the test is too hard;" and "The kids just don't care about the test." How would you handle this situation?
- No excuses — move teacher away from excuse
 - Purpose/use of assessment
 - Disposition of a coach
 - Make data manageable

Source: Jeffco (Jefferson County, CO) Public Schools.

TOOL 6.7

Middle school instructional coach written interview questions

1. You are on an elevator with a school board member. You have the length of the ride from the 1st floor to the 5th floor to help the board member understand how your role as an instructional coach has a direct impact on student achievement and why, in a time of budget reductions, the instructional coach position should remain in every school. What do you say?

2. What professional reading has had the greatest effect on your instructional practice and why?

3. What personal reading have you done lately?

Source: Maggie Westhoff, Washington Elementary, Glendale (AZ) School District.

TOOL 6.8**Proposed process for coach placement**

STEP	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
1.	Create a pool of candidates for coaching positions. Note each candidate's strengths and challenges to share with schools.	Districtwide screening committee representing all stakeholder groups or in accordance with the procedures established by the steering committee
2.	Interview desirable candidates.	Individual school principals and their interview committees
3.	Negotiate with other schools if the same coach is desired. Consider coaches' preferences for school placement.	Principals
4.	Make final placement decisions.	Principals

Source: Maggie Westhoff, Washington Elementary, Glendale (AZ) School District.