



EXECUTIVE
COACHING FOR
SUPERINTENDENTS

SUPPORT FOR MEETING
21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES



HOW WOULD YOU
DEFINE COACHING?

Take a moment to
write down your
definition.

WHAT COACHES DO

They build **relationships** with the leaders they support.

They **listen** to their clients.

They provide **feedback** (often in the form of questions) designed to support the leaders' **self-regulation** (Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?), ability to think through a problem, and tailored to the client's experience and expertise.

They **ask questions** grounded in their client's **problem of practice** to challenge their assumptions about what is possible, reinforce their personal agency, help them design action plans, review data, and reflect.

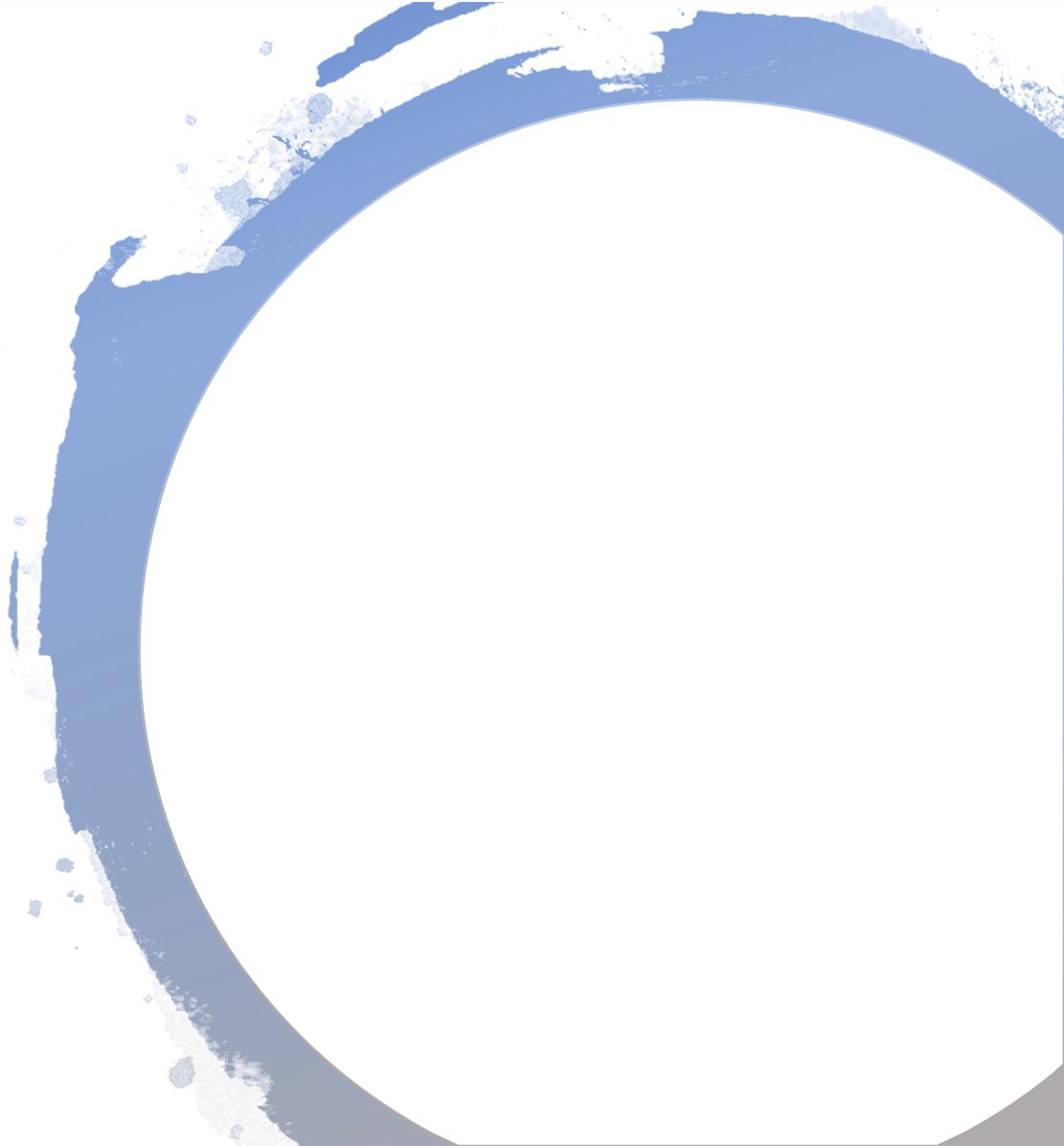
They connect their work to the **mission, vision, and long term goals** of the leader and the organization in order to build powerful systems, structures, and cultures.

They support clients in deciding on **strategy**.

They assist the leader in developing powerful **theory of action** for improving student learning.

They help leaders **assess their competence** using a variety of data sources and relevant competencies and support them in improving their skills.

Superintendents and Principals rate coaching as the most valuable leadership development support that they receive.





WHAT
SUPERINTENDENTS TELL
US ABOUT WHY THEY
VALUE COACHING

THEY WANT A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE THEY TRUST

I think executive coaching with the right person is very, very, very valuable. For me, it's been very helpful. ... My coach is confident in what he's saying but he's not telling you what to do. The level of conversation is high. I would be less inclined to be engaged if it was somebody who wanted to tell me what they did all the time. I'm not really interested in that. I might be but not for this purpose. I think it's easy for people in leadership positions to talk about things that they've done. I don't have time for that. This definitely works for me because of how [my coach] does this. (Superintendent Client B)

THEY WANT
THEIR
THINKING TO
BE
CHALLENGED

There were times with my coach when he would be asking me probing questions in order to facilitate my thinking and problem solving and it was so difficult. I don't really think I'm a dummy but I'll tell you some of those questions I just wanted to say, 'Is this a trick? Is there a real answer? Or could you just tell me the answer?' ... His questioning of me was very, very effective. Very effective. Yes, difficult. Challenged my thinking but ultimately helped me and I think as he guided me to problem solve and to look at different dimensions of an issue it helped me to be able to apply that in different situations. (Superintendent Client A)

THEY DON'T WANT WAR STORIES OR ADVICE

In my first year as superintendent, I was assigned a mentor and it was not a good experience at all. That person, when I met with them, wanted to talk to me about all the things that they do and how they do things and didn't really have an interest in how I do things and how they could help me do those things. It was really kind of like, 'Here's what I do and maybe you should do that too.' So my mentoring experience I would say was not very effective whatsoever. I felt that coaching from LEAD provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my own practice and let me grow as a professional much more than the traditional mentoring did. (Superintendent Client D)

THEY WANT
TO FIGURE OUT
BETTER WAYS
TO DO THINGS

- *I now have different ways to approach the evaluation of cabinet members. I had an evaluation meeting this morning which I would say was more successful having had that conversation with my coach before. [Superintendent Client G]*
- *I gained a better understanding of my role in working with staff and helping them think more critically of their roles as teachers and how I as a leader can guide them as opposed to telling them. There is a big difference between telling people what they have to do and helping them understand why it is important for them to do it. [Principal Client C]*



THE MOST
VALUABLE THINGS
SUPERINTENDENTS
GAINED FROM
COACHING...

- The encouragement, support and advice of someone who understands their work
- Honest, critical feedback
- Help in focusing on priorities
- Support in reflecting on their practice

Matt Geary, Manchester Public Schools
mgeary@mpspride.org

Fran Rabinowitz, Connecticut Association of Public
School Superintendents
frabinowitz@caps.org

Isobel Stevenson, Connecticut Center for School
Change
istevenson@ctschoollchange.org