

# Executive Coach Field Guide

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# Introduction to Executive Coaching



# Definition and Purpose

A **VASS executive coach** is a sitting or former superintendent who partners with a new superintendent to enhance their performance, leadership skills, and personal development. They provide confidential and personalized coaching, addressing each individual's specific needs, challenges, and aspirations. They serve as an ongoing support system that fosters continuous improvement and enables superintendents to lead with confidence, competence, and a focus on student success.

The purpose of the VASS executive coach is to facilitate self-discovery, offer objective feedback, and provide guidance to help executives unlock their full potential in leading a school district. Through a collaborative and customized approach, executive coaches assist in identifying strengths, addressing weaknesses, and developing strategies for success. Ultimately, executive coaching empowers leaders to maximize their effectiveness, drive organizational growth, and achieve sustainable professional and personal outcomes through a highly reflective process.

Executive coaching is a specialized form of professional learning and support tailored to school district superintendents' unique challenges and responsibilities.



# Executive Coaching vs Leadership Coaching

While executive and leadership coaching may share the same goal of enhancing leadership skills and effectiveness in education, they vary in their distinct focus, target audience, and areas of emphasis. The table below summarizes the key differences in how executive coaching supports high-level educational leaders in navigating strategic challenges and driving system-wide change. In contrast, leadership coaching in education takes a more comprehensive approach, emphasizing leadership development at all levels of the education community.

	Executive Coaching in Education	Leadership Coaching in Education
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is specifically for educational leaders at the highest administrative levels, such as school district superintendents, principals, and top-level administrators</li> <li>Addresses the unique challenges and responsibilities of managing educational institutions or systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encompasses a broader range of individuals within the education system, including aspiring leaders, department heads, middle managers, and teachers in leadership roles</li> <li>Develops leadership skills relevant to their positions and fosters leadership potential within the education community</li> </ul>
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centers on strategic decision-making, adhering to the organization's vision, policy development, resource allocation, and system-wide improvement initiatives</li> <li>Addresses challenges specific to education leadership roles, and their impact on the entire educational system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers various leadership competencies applicable to multiple roles within schools and educational organizations</li> <li>Includes instructional leadership, team-building, communication, classroom management, and fostering a positive school culture</li> </ul>
Target Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes top-level educational leaders overseeing districts, schools, and multiple departments or divisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is more inclusive and may target individuals at different levels of leadership, such as department heads, teacher leaders, or even new teachers looking to develop their leadership skills within their classrooms or teams</li> </ul>
Organizational Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significantly impacts the entire educational system</li> <li>The decisions and strategies made by the superintendent and other top-level leaders influence student outcomes, teacher performance, and the overall quality of education delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can positively impact schools and educational institutions</li> <li>May be more localized, focusing on specific classrooms, departments, or teams.</li> </ul>
Depth of Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves a more in-depth and long-term coaching process, addressing systemic challenges and sustainable leadership development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can vary in intensity and duration based on the needs and career stage of the individuals receiving coaching</li> </ul>

# The Differences: A Coach, a Mentor, and a Consultant

	Coach	Mentor	Consultant
Approach	The coach asks open-ended questions to help the superintendent explore their feelings, thoughts, and potential solutions. The coach does not provide direct advice but encourages self-reflection and personal growth.	The mentor draws from their experiences and expertise to offer guidance, insights, and advice based on what has worked for them in similar situations.	The consultant analyzes the superintendent's situation, assesses the problem, and provides specific recommendations or solutions based on their expertise and knowledge.
Role	Coaches act as facilitators, encouraging self-discovery and empowering superintendents to take ownership of their actions and decisions. They do not provide direct answers or solutions but instead support the individual's growth and development by helping them tap into their own resources.	Mentors serve as role models and advisors, drawing from their own experiences to offer insights and wisdom to the mentee. They may provide career guidance, share knowledge, and offer encouragement to help the mentee progress in their chosen path.	Consultants take on a more directive role, offering solutions, making recommendations, and often implementing action plans on behalf of the superintendent. They bring external perspectives and expertise to help superintendents solve problems and make informed decisions.
Purpose	Coaching is often used to enhance performance, build leadership skills, improve communication, overcome challenges, and achieve specific goals.	Mentoring aims to support the personal and professional growth of the mentee, help them navigate challenges, and provide valuable insights and perspectives based on the mentor's experiences.	Consulting is commonly used when there is a need for specialized knowledge or skills that the organization or individual lacks, and they seek expert guidance to address specific challenges or achieve specific objectives.
<b>Scenario Example:</b> A superintendent faces budgetary constraints and needs to present a proposed budget to the school board for approval.			
Verbal Response	"As you prepare to present the proposed budget to the school board, let's explore your goals and priorities for the district. What are the key areas you want to emphasize? How might you communicate your vision effectively during the presentation? What are potential concerns you need to address? Let's work together to identify those areas and find strategies to build your confidence in presenting the budget."	"I've been in a similar situation before, and I understand how presenting a budget to the school board can be challenging and crucial. One approach that worked for me was focusing on clear, data-driven explanations for each allocation. Also, be prepared to address potential questions or concerns they might raise during the presentation."	"I've reviewed the financial data and have some recommendations to optimize the proposed budget. By reallocating resources from non-essential areas to high-priority programs, we can create a more a balanced and effective budget presentation. Additionally, let's prepare clear and concise visual aids to enhance your presentation to the school board."

# Roles and Responsibilities



## Superintendent

embraces the partnership with an executive coach to foster personal and professional growth. S/he actively participates by setting goals and exploring areas for development while being willing to be vulnerable, take risks, and maintain a curious mindset. Together they reflect and challenge assumptions to drive positive change in their community.

## Executive Coach

is a trusted partner and facilitator, actively listening, questioning, and challenging the superintendent to explore leadership challenges and opportunities. S/he collaborates to set goals, develop personalized plans, and support skill-building while ensuring confidentiality and relevant and timely professional development.

## Senior Coaches

support the executive coaches in their professional development and effectiveness. They act as a trusted advisor, providing guidance, mentorship, and resources to ensure the coaching team has the tools to provide quality coaching services. They also facilitate the collaborative match between the executive coaches with superintendents.

The VASS Senior Coaches are [Jared Cotton](#), and [Lori Harper](#).

## VASS Leadership

establishes the conditions that allow the senior and executive coaches to focus on the needs of the superintendents. They provide the resources to promote a successful VASS Executive Coaching Program.

The point of contact for VASS Leadership is [Amy Griffin](#).



# How to Become a VASS Executive Coach



# Criteria and Interest Form

Sitting and retired superintendents are uniquely qualified to provide coaching and support to new superintendents. They have a wealth of practical knowledge and local experience that can be invaluable to new superintendents who are just starting out. They can share their insights on the challenges and opportunities facing superintendents, and they can offer guidance on how to navigate the complex world of education leadership. A highly-qualified VASS executive coach meets the following criteria:

- Accomplished superintendent (minimum of 3 years experience)
- Member of VASS who attends the VASS Conferences and stays current with the evolution of the role.
- Experience coaching superintendents or other senior-level leaders
- Time to devote/commit to colleague
- Strong understanding of K-12 educational leadership and organizational change
- Diverse network of contacts in the K-12 and adjacent fields

Sitting and retired Superintendents who feel they meet these qualifications and are interested in serving as an executive coach for a new superintendent are encouraged to express interest through this **form**. Executive coaches will attend a preliminary training session. If selected as a coach, they will participate in up to three follow up executive coaching trainings.

Superintendents wishing to request an executive coach use this **form**.

A screenshot of a web form titled "VASS Executive Coaching Interest Form". The form includes fields for "First name", "Last name", "Email", and "Phone number", each with a "Enter your answer" prompt. It also has two radio button questions: "Have you been a VASS Executive Coach in the past?" (Yes/No) and "Indicate where you have served as a Superintendent" (with a text input field). A "Submit" button is at the bottom, with a note "Have you not yet provided feedback?" below it.

# Becoming a VASS Executive Coach

## Timeline

### Express Interest

Sitting/retired superintendent submits interest form and completes the profile template.  
New superintendents request an executive coach.

### Superintendent Match

Senior coaches assist with matches.  
Executive coach and new superintendent complete agreement forms.

### Executive Coaching Training

Senior coaches lead professional learning session for executive coaches.

#### Summer

- See [VASS Executive Coach Service website](#) for current year date and time.

### Training Series

Senior coaches lead professional learning series for executive coaches.

**Up to three (3) virtual or in-person sessions throughout the year**

- See [VASS Executive Coach Service website](#) for current year date and time.

# Becoming a VASS Executive Coach

## Agreements

### Engagements

Establish an appropriate cadence of a **minimum of 8 coaching engagements**, including onsite in-person and synchronous virtual engagement.

#### Specific engagement expectations:

- First coaching session– Onsite in-person
- Virtual and/or in-person Executive Coaching Trainings throughout the year
- In-person coaching during VTLA at the VASS Conferences. See the [VASS VTLA website](#) for current year date and time.

### Compensation

- Submit the Executive Coach Payment Invoice in January (\$1,000 + travel)
- Submit the Executive Coach Payment Request Form in May (\$1,000 + travel)

### Travel

- Travel Reimbursement should be limited to 4 coaching sessions.

### Agreements

Once the match has been determined, VASS leadership will send an agreement electronically to both parties to get their e-signatures. [Sample](#) for information purposes.

### Payment

- Please complete the [VDOE certification form](#).
- [VDOE W9 PDF](#)
- Please use this form to [Submit an Invoice](#)



# Executive Coaching Preparation Resources



# Establishing the Conditions for Coaching

Superintendents express needing robust networking to connect with peers and share best practices, enabling them to learn from one another. When tackling complex challenges, they seek innovative and granular approaches tailored to their unique contexts. Local expertise is vital, as superintendents rely on understanding their communities' specific needs and dynamics to make informed decisions and foster positive educational outcomes. How might an executive coach establish conditions for this type of collaborative support?

## Questions for Executive Coaching Candidates to Consider:

- How will I balance my current responsibilities with the added role of supporting a new superintendent?
- How will I maintain confidentiality while coaching a new superintendent?
- Do I have connections to the new superintendent's school division that could interfere with my coaching effectiveness?

## Pairing Superintendents with an Executive Coach

The following information was used to match new superintendents with executive coaches:

- **Superintendent Self-Assessment** aligned to NELP Standards
- Executive Coach Profiles (**from this template**)
- Current list of Executive Coaches

Executive Coach Profile	
<p>Please provide a brief description of yourself. These documents will be used to inform matches between Superintendents and Executive Coaches.</p> <p><b>Directions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Place your name in the title of the document.</li><li>2. Check the sharing permissions to ensure "everyone with the link can view."</li><li>3. Copy and paste the link to this document in the last field of the Executive Coach Interest Form.</li></ol>	
Executive Coach's Name	
Highlight of Career Impact / Pride Points: In 150-200 words briefly describe yourself and your skills / experiences.	
Years of Experience as a Superintendent:	
Leadership Experience: Role, Location (state/division) and Size.	
Leadership Specializations: Highlight your top 3-4 areas of expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mission, Vision and Strategic Leadership for Continuous Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics and Professional Norms <input type="checkbox"/> Equitable, Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Instructional Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach and Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Board Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Operations and Resource Management <input type="checkbox"/> School Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Policy, Governance and Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other?

# Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

Ethics are the cornerstone of any reputable executive coaching practice. As an executive coach, maintaining a high standard of ethics is essential to building trust, fostering a safe and supportive coaching environment, and ensuring the best interests of the new superintendent are upheld. By adhering to the following set of ethical principles, coaches can navigate the complex dynamics of their profession with integrity and professionalism:

- **Confidentiality** An executive coach must prioritize maintaining strict confidentiality with the superintendent. This includes safeguarding all information shared during coaching sessions, ensuring that the identities of key players and discussion notes remain private and secure.
- **Conflict of Interest** It is crucial for an executive coach to avoid any conflicts of interest that may compromise their objectivity and impartiality. This involves transparency about biases or activities or relationships that could hinder their ability to provide unbiased guidance and support to their superintendent.
- **Boundaries and Professionalism** An executive coach must establish clear boundaries and maintain a professional relationship. This includes avoiding personal relationships, refraining from exploiting the coaching relationship for personal gain, and adhering to professional standards of conduct.
- **Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination** The executive coach embraces diversity, models fairness and respect, and refrains from any form of discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.
- **Informed Consent** Prior to commencing coaching, the executive coach will ensure that the new superintendent fully understands the coaching process, the potential outcomes, and any associated risks. Informed consent is crucial to establish a mutual understanding and a trusting relationship.
- **Continuous Professional Development** Executive coaches are committed to their own ongoing professional growth and development. This includes staying informed about the latest coaching methodologies, research, and ethical guidelines, as well as engaging in consultation with the VASS senior coaches to ensure the quality and effectiveness of their coaching practice.

# Coaching Log

The coaching log is a valuable tool for both the executive coach and the new superintendent. It provides a record of the coaching conversations, the goals that have been set, and the progress that has been made. The log can also be used to track the superintendent's challenges and successes, and to identify areas where further coaching is needed.

The coaching log should be maintained in a confidential manner. The executive coach should not share the log with anyone without the superintendent's consent. The log should be stored in a secure location, and it should be destroyed when the coaching relationship ends.

The coaching log may include the following information:

- Date and time of the coaching session
- Topics that were discussed
- Goals that were set
- Progress that was made
- Challenges and successes
- Next steps identified

Some additional tips for maintaining a coaching log:

- Be as detailed as possible in your notes. This will help you to remember the coaching conversations and to track progress.
- Use clear and concise language. This will make it easy for you to refer back to the log later.
- Be objective in your notes. Avoid including your own personal opinions or biases.
- Update the log regularly. This will help you to stay on track and to track progress over time.

The coaching log can be a valuable tool for both the coach and the client. It can help to ensure that the coaching relationship is productive and that the client's goals are met. Here is a [sample](#) you may use or modify to meet your needs.

# Building Leadership Competencies

A competency-based executive coaching model offers a powerful and non-evaluative approach to empower personal and professional growth. By focusing on development rather than evaluation, the program creates a safe and supportive environment for individuals to explore their strengths, weaknesses, and growth areas. For these reasons the VASS Executive Coaching Model leverages the NELP District Leadership Standards - **NELP Standards**

## NELP Aligned Competency Progressions

Through self-awareness and reflection, new superintendents will gain insights into their unique competencies and developmental needs. The **NELP Competency Progressions for VASS Executive Coaching** has been designed to help superintendents identify current competence (knowledge, skills and behaviors) along a progression and set tangible growth goals. Through customized support from the executive coach, the new superintendent will be able to address specific challenges and aspirations, while building skills and taking ownership of their growth journey. This approach fosters long-term impact, as superintendents develop strategies and insights that can be applied beyond the coaching program.

NELP Standard 1 - Mission, Vision and Improvement - Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success of each school and district by setting the conditions, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community. (NIPFA, 2018, NELP Standards, p.11)		
Approaching (2)	Practicing - Meets (3)	Facilitating - Exceeds (4)
<b>1.1 Mission and Vision Design &amp; Communication</b>		
Assists in school and/or district-level efforts in the design of a mission and vision that includes one or more of the following elements of data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and/or community by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing feedback on school and/or district team needs.</li> <li>Identifying possible changes to improve school or district team direction and mission.</li> <li>Advocating for school and/or district's mission and vision by communicating it to colleagues and applying it in own work.</li> </ul>	Designs a mission and vision for a school, major initiative, and/or district that includes one or more of the following elements of data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and/or community by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborating with key colleagues and stakeholders to identify shared vision, direction, and needs.</li> <li>Aligning mission and vision to larger district, state, and/or national policies and research-based best practices in above elements.</li> <li>Championing the school's and/or district's mission and vision through integration of a communication plan that reaches targeted stakeholders in the school and/or district community.</li> </ul>	Leads school/district teams in the effective design and implementation of a mission and vision with purposeful considerations for data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building a shared vision, direction, and needs assessment across district/school leaders and a diverse representation of key stakeholders in above elements.</li> <li>Aligning mission and vision to larger state and national policies and research-based best practices in above elements.</li> <li>Overseeing implementation of a communications system that integrates targeted communication modes (website, social media, events, etc.) of district mission and vision to reach diverse district and community stakeholders (educators, staff, students, parents, surrounding community organizations, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 1.2 - Strategic Planning</b>		
Supports school and/or district-level efforts in the design of a strategic plan's values and priorities by providing review and feedback for strategy within scope of influence.	Designs a school and/or components of a district strategic plan including goals, objectives, and strategy through collaboration with school/district teams that will lead and implement strategy.	Leads in the effective design and implementation of a comprehensive district strategic plan including goals, objectives, strategy, that reflects mission, vision, and values through research-based best practices in strategy design and implementation and engagement of diverse stakeholders to integrate community values and priorities.

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# Building Leadership Competencies

## The Crosswalk with the Superintendent Evaluation

The Virginia Department of Education provides a foundational guide for superintendent evaluation which serves as a valuable reference for assessing performance in educational leadership roles. The crosswalk document linked below provides a comprehensive comparison and alignment of the [Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Superintendents with the National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards for District Level Leaders](#) (NELP). The crosswalk serves to support executive coaches and superintendents in effectively linking competency development that results from the coaching process with evaluation criteria outlined by the state. The additional level of detail around knowledge, skills and behaviors found in the NELP competency progressions further strengthens the connection between the evaluation criteria and the specific competencies required for success in the superintendent role.

### Crosswalk VA Superintendent Evaluation Guidelines with District Leader NELP Standards

#### Crosswalk of Virginia Superintendent Evaluation Guidelines with NELP District Leader Standards

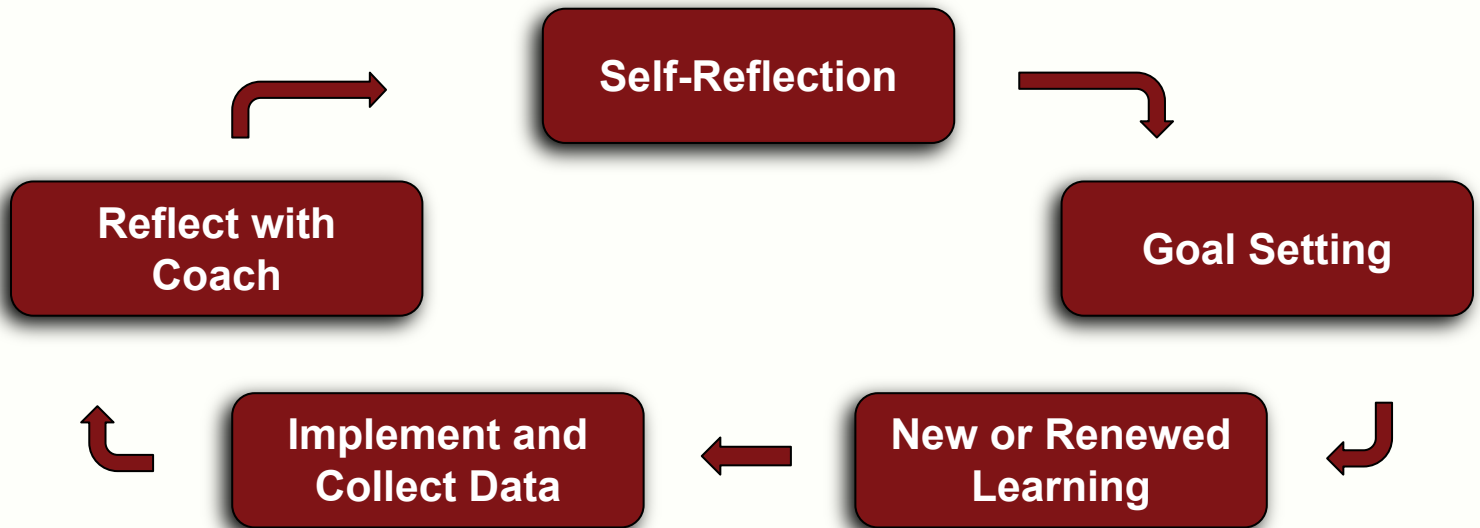
This document serves as a valuable resource by providing a comprehensive comparison and alignment of the [Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Superintendents](#) with the [National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards for District Level Leaders](#) (NELP). By crosswalking these two resources, we seek to identify commonalities, overlaps, and areas of divergence which enable the design of an Executive Coaching Model that streamlines coaching efforts while maintaining a genuine coaching stance.

National Education Leadership Preparation	Virginia Superintendent Evaluation Guidelines
<b>Mission, Vision and Strategic Leadership for Continuous Improvement</b>	
<b>Mission and Vision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate existing mission and vision processes and statements</li> <li>Collaboratively design an actionable district mission and vision attentive to such considerations as data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community</li> <li>Develop a comprehensive plan for communicating the mission and vision to multiple constituencies</li> </ul> <b>Strategic Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate existing improvement processes</li> <li>Develop a district-wide improvement process that includes data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation</li> <li>Articulate a process for strategic planning</li> </ul>	1.1 Provides leadership in the development of a shared vision for educational improvement that inspires employees to work collaboratively. 1.2 Works collaboratively with the school board and stakeholders to develop and implement policies that define organizational expectations and result in continuous improvement. 2.1 Organizes the collaborative development and implementation of a division strategic plan based on analysis of data from a variety of sources. 2.2 Works collaboratively to develop long- and short-range goals and objectives consistent with the strategic plan and monitors progress in achieving the goals and objectives. 2.3 Seeks and uses human and material resources outside the division that may support and/or enhance the achievement of goals and objectives.

# Building Leadership Competencies Leveraging the NELP Standards as an Executive Coaching Tool

By anchoring the coaching process in the NELP framework, the executive coach ensures that the superintendent's development is aligned with broader expectations for educational leadership. This cycle presents one strategy to utilize the NELP framework as a strategic tool to enhance the coaching process and drive superintendent success.

Consider familiarizing the yourselves with the progression to establish a shared language for discussing leadership competencies. An initial self-reflection by the superintendent, where they rate their current practice against each standard on the continuum (e.g., approaching, practicing, facilitating) provides a baseline for identifying strengths and areas for growth.



From these reflections, the coach and superintendent collaboratively identify personal professional goals with and action plan. That plan provides clear direction and focus to drive new or renewed learning, implement next steps and gather data. Coaching sessions provide the opportunity for the executive coach to ask open, inquiry-based questions to deepen growth and draw connections to the Superintendent evaluation criteria.

# Building Leadership Competencies Using Protocols to Focus Coaching Conversations

Using protocols in coaching can help to create a more effective and impactful coaching experience. A protocol is a set of steps structured to guide personal reflection, conversations and learning. Protocols can be used in a variety of settings, such as one-on-one coaching sessions, group discussions, and team meetings. One of the intentions of a protocol-driven conversation is to help maintain focus on high impact strategic outcomes. By using protocols, coaches can ensure that conversations are productive and lead to meaningful learning.

## Benefits of using protocols:

- They can create a safe and inclusive space for everyone to share their thoughts and ideas.
- They can be used to explore complex topics in a systematic way.
- They can help to identify and address challenges.
- They can be used to generate new ideas and solutions.
- They can help to build relationships and trust.

## Examples:

- **Tuning Protocol** - for gathering feedback to refine and idea or artifact.
- **Consultancy Protocol** - to help individuals think more expansively about a concreated dilemma.
- **Block Party** - for large group conversation that allows for open and collaborative dialogue.
- **Appreciative Inquiry** - for a positive approach to change that focuses on strengths and possibilities.

## More Protocols:

- **National School Reform Faculty**
- **School Reform Initiative**
- **Liberating Structures**
- **Project Zero Thinking Routines**

# EFFECTIVE COACHING TECHNIQUES

## ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is an essential coaching technique that involves understanding the superintendent's thoughts, feelings, and perspectives without interruption or judgment. It helps coaches build rapport, gain insight into the superintendent's challenges, and establish trust.

## QUESTIONING

An executive coach utilizes open-ended and thought-provoking questions to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking, leading to greater self-awareness and clarity by prompting a deeper exploration of a superintendent's goals, values, and potential solutions.

## GOAL SETTING

An effective executive coach helps a superintendent set clear, achievable, and measurable goals by establishing specific outcomes and creating action plans to achieve them.

## FEEDBACK

An executive coach offers valuable feedback to a superintendent by sharing insights and observations gained during coaching sessions.

## REFLECTION

Through reflection practices, an executive coach encourages a superintendent to evaluate their progress, identify strengths, acknowledge areas for improvement, and explore new perspectives. Reflection is an integral part of the entire coaching process.

## EMPATHY & SUPPORT

An executive coach provides a safe and supportive environment where a superintendent feels comfortable discussing challenges and exploring new ideas. By acknowledging a superintendent's feelings and experiences, a coach shows empathy and compassion.

## STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH

An executive coach identifies and leverages a superintendent's strengths and positive qualities. Emphasizing strengths enhances a superintendent's confidence and facilitates growth and development.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

An executive coach helps a superintendent achieve their goals by holding them accountable for their commitments and actions. Together they progress-monitor, celebrate successes, and discuss obstacles to staying on track and maintaining momentum.

## ACTION PLANNING

An executive coach assists a superintendent in breaking down their goals into actionable steps. They support superintendents in developing practical plans and strategies, guiding them through potential obstacles and adjustments.

## BUILDING SELF-EFFICACY

An executive coach promotes self-efficacy by encouraging a superintendent to believe in their abilities and skills to achieve their desired outcomes. An executive coach inspires and empowers a superintendent to own the learning and growth.



# Executive Coaching

## Possible Areas of Growth

For Superintendents, the Executive Coaching process may focus on some or all of the following areas:

- ✓ **Stakeholder Management** Superintendents work with various stakeholders, such as school boards, teachers, parents, and community members. Executive coaches help them navigate complex relationships and build effective communication strategies.

- In considering your stakeholders, what do you believe are their primary needs and expectations?
- What strategies might you consider to help you tailor your communication to resonate with different stakeholders?

- ✓ **Community Engagement** Superintendents need to engage with the community and build partnerships. Executive coaches help them develop strategies for meaningful community involvement.

- Who are key stakeholders you need to engage with to ensure the success of your initiatives?
- What methods or platforms could you use to involve stakeholders in decision-making actively?

- ✓ **Change Management** Superintendents often initiate and oversee significant changes within the district. Executive coaches help them manage change effectively and address potential resistance.

- As you reflect on your district's current circumstances, can you pinpoint what specific factors prompted you to consider making this change now?
- What potential sources of resistance or opposition do you foresee as you introduce this change?

- ✓ **Problem-Solving and Decision-Making** Executive coaching supports superintendents in honing their problem-solving and decision-making abilities, especially when faced with challenging and high-stakes situations.

- If we were to dig deeper, what underlying causes might be driving this challenge?
- Imagine you're in a space where limitations don't exist. What potential courses of action can you explore to address this challenge?

- ✓ **Team Building and Collaboration** Executive coaches work with superintendents to build strong leadership teams and foster a culture of collaboration and trust among district staff.

- When you think about creating a culture of trust and open communication among your leadership team, what approaches might you consider to lay the foundation for this kind of environment?
- As you learn more about the individual strengths and expertise of your leadership team, what distinctive qualities can you identify that contribute to the team's collective excellence?

## Executive Coaching

### Possible Areas of Growth Continued.

- ✓ **Strategic Planning** Executive coaches assist superintendents in developing long-term plans and goals for the school district, aligning them with the district's vision and mission.

- As you craft these goals, how might they contribute to advancing the district's core values?
- How can you ensure that these outcomes are both attainable and meaningful to the district's growth?

- ✓ **Leadership Development** Executive coaching focuses on developing and refining the superintendent's leadership skills, including vision-setting, strategic planning, and the ability to inspire and motivate stakeholders.

- When visualizing yourself as a communicator, what approaches might you consider to create messages that are more inspiring and compelling?
- What steps can you take to continuously hone and improve your leadership skills, especially in the areas of vision-setting and motivating stakeholders?

- ✓ **Accountability and Progress Monitoring** The Executive coaching process includes setting measurable goals and regularly assessing progress to ensure the superintendent's growth and development.

- What specific goals do you aim to achieve as a superintendent?
- What measurable indicators will you use to track progress towards your goals?

- ✓ **Reflective Practice** The key to empowering superintendents in growth and deep understanding in this process is reflection. Executive coaches encourage superintendents to engage in reflective practice, enabling them to learn from their experiences and grow as leaders continuously.

- Think about a recent accomplishment or success in your role. What factors contributed to that positive outcome?"
- How might you apply these factors in other areas of your leadership?

- ✓ **Work-Life Balance** Given the demanding nature of their role, executive coaches may help superintendents achieve a healthy work-life balance and manage stress effectively.

- How do you currently prioritize your professional and personal responsibilities?
- What coping mechanisms might you rely on to navigate challenges while maintaining your well-being?

# Role Play Scenarios for Addressing Common Challenges of Superintendents

Superintendents face various challenges that require thoughtful and strategic approaches to address effectively. As an executive coach, **effective coaching techniques** such as reflection practices, powerful questioning, and active listening can empower superintendents to handle these situations with solid leadership skills, empathy, and the ability to make informed decisions that positively impact the school district and its stakeholders.

The **primary approach of an executive coach** is to ask open-ended questions to help the superintendent explore their feelings, thoughts, and potential solutions, encouraging self-reflection and personal growth rather than providing direct advice.

When examining each scenario, the superintendent should consider the following:

- Legal implications
- Requirements of policies and regulations
- Provisions in state code and the SOQs (Statement of Qualifications)
- Relationship of the scenario to the division mission and vision
- Impact on students, parents, division staff, community, and other stakeholders
- Possible actions, reactions, feedback, and reflection

\*Click on the scenario on the right for a direct link to the page.

NAVIGATING  
A  
POLITICALLY  
DIVISIVE  
CLIMATE

MANAGING  
DIFFICULT  
CONVERSATIONS  
AND CONFLICT

RESISTANCE  
TO CHANGE

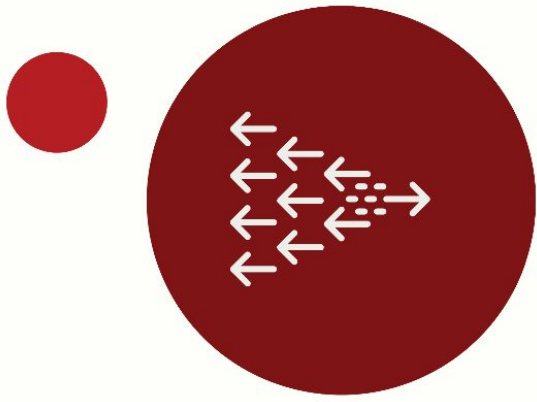
OVERCOMING  
LIMITED  
BELIEFS AND  
SELF-DOUBT

DEALING  
WITH  
STRESS  
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AND  
PROMOTING  
STAFF TO  
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POSITIONS

MAINTAINING  
FOCUS ON HIGH  
IMPACT  
OUTCOMES

SUSTAINING  
LONG-TERM  
GROWTH AND  
DEVELOPMENT



# RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

## SCENARIO

# 1

The school district is implementing a new technology initiative to enhance teaching and learning. Some teachers hesitate to use technology in their classrooms, expressing concerns about their technical skills.

How might a superintendent provide support and training to help these teachers embrace technology and see its potential benefits for student engagement and learning outcomes?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

The district is considering shifting to a competency-based grading system, but several parents and community members resist this change, fearing it might disadvantage their children.

How might a superintendent address parents' concerns and communicate the benefits of the new grading system to gain their support?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

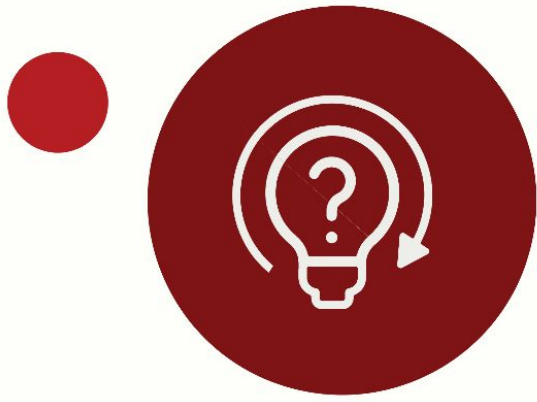
# 3

A school in the district has successfully piloted project-based learning and other learner-centered instructional practices for the past two years. Positive survey results from students, families, and staff have led the district to approve a district-wide budget for resources and professional development to implement these practices. However, one-third of the staff resists the change and voiced their concerns to their principals and union representatives.

How might a superintendent approach addressing their concerns and encouraging their acceptance of these new practices?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?





# OVERCOMING LIMITING BELIEFS AND SELF-DOUBT

## SCENARIO

# 1

The superintendent introduces new safety measures in response to recent security incidents at schools in the district. At the Board Meeting, several community members and two board members articulated polarized political views regarding security and gun control, leading to heated debates and conflicting beliefs about the appropriate level of security.

How might a superintendent approach this issue and know what to effectively communicate to all stakeholders?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

The school district faces financial challenges, and the superintendent is considering cutting certain educational programs to address budget deficits. The superintendent recognizes the importance of these programs but struggles with self-doubt and internal conflict in deciding whether to prioritize financial stability or preserve valued programs. The superintendent feels responsible for the well-being of students, staff, and the community and fears the potential backlash from affected stakeholders.

How might the superintendent approach this decision and remain committed to students and the district's long-term success?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

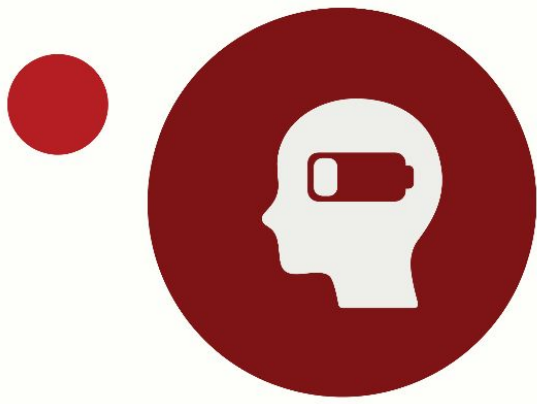
## SCENARIO

# 3

The superintendent proposes changes to the district's reading curriculum that aligns with the latest educational standards. One focus of the reading program is inclusive literacy. Some community members hold limited or conflicting beliefs about the proposed changes. They express concerns about the potential impact on their children's education and demand that the books are either removed from the required reading or replaced with titles approved by community members.

What will the superintendent need to consider in their approach to this issue?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?



# DEALING WITH STRESS AND BURNOUT

## SCENARIO

# 1

During a hectic academic year, it's important to pay attention to the well-being of your principals. At the last administration meeting, there were signs of burnout and high-stress levels among them. One principal interrupted a colleague while two others were visibly distracted. Most of the group seemed anxious, highlighting the need for support and resources to address these concerns.

How would a superintendent address this issue and promote well-being among your leadership team?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

Representatives for teachers in each of the district's schools reported in a meeting with the superintendent that staff in their buildings are struggling with an increased workload with new district curriculum initiatives, a lack of support and resources, and mounting pressure from the state tests.

How might a superintendent address their stress and burnout concerns while ensuring that students receive quality education and opportunities with the latest educational practices?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

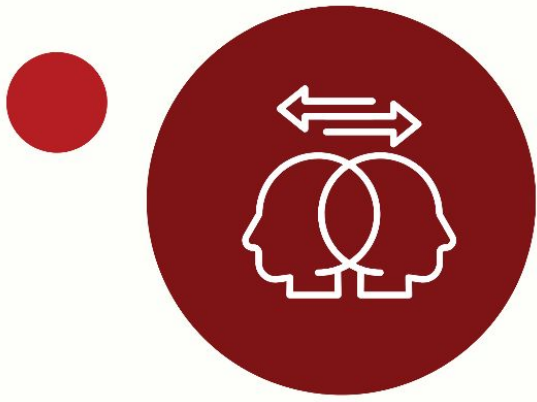
## SCENARIO

# 3

An external accrediting agency is in the process of conducting an extensive accreditation review of the school district. This review includes a comprehensive evaluation on of various aspects of the district's educational programs, policies, and performance to determine whether it meets established standards of excellence.

The superintendent's demeanor is evidence of the pressure and stress from the accreditation process. They appear visibly exhausted, and their typically composed and approachable nature is replaced with an air of urgency and tension. As the pressure mounts, the superintendent may also become more irritable or short-tempered. The fear of disappointing stakeholders, staff, students, and the community further amplifies their stress.

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?



# MANAGING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS AND CONFLICT

## SCENARIO

# 1

Two secondary school principals disagree about allocating technology resources, and their conflict affects their collaboration on other district-wide projects.

How might a superintendent mediate this conflict and facilitate a constructive conversation to find a resolution?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

A special education teacher and a parent are in a heated dispute about classroom discipline and services. The situation has escalated, and a special education advocate is now involved.

How might a superintendent mediate the conversation and foster understanding between the two parties to resolve the issue amicably?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 3

The curriculum director and human resource director in your district have conflicting leadership styles, leading to tension and disagreements among their teams.

How might a superintendent facilitate a difficult conversation between these leaders to resolve conflicts and improve collaboration?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?



# SUSTAINING LONG-TERM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

## SCENARIO

# 1

Your district has experienced significant improvements over the past three years in student literacy. District common assessments and state states are above average. The community and board of education members have shared positive remarks during public meetings on how pleased they are with the progress.

How might a superintendent ensure the sustained growth and continuous development of the school district, avoiding complacency?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

After implementing successful improvement initiatives in personalized learning and technology integration, you are concerned about potential complacency in your leadership team. There is a growing lack of accountability and follow-through with teacher implementation.

How might a superintendent encourage ongoing professional learning to sustain the district's growth trajectory?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 3

The district has seen a notable increase in student achievement in their elementary math scores in the past few years. Consistent professional learning, instructional coaching through job-embedded learning, and professional learning communities have made a difference.

How might a superintendent engage with various stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, and community members, to celebrate successes and maintain momentum for continuous improvement?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?





# SELECTING AND PROMOTING STAFF TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

## SCENARIO

# 1

You have several internal candidates expressing interest in an assistant superintendent position.

How might a superintendent design an inclusive and fair selection process that assesses their qualifications and aligns with the district's leadership needs?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

Most of your senior-level administrators - assistant superintendents and curriculum directors - are over 53 years old. In the next 6-10 years, there might be a plethora of retirements. Unfortunately, since the pandemic, the number of candidates applying has decreased dramatically.

How might a superintendent conduct grow leaders in their district who aligns with the school's vision and values?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

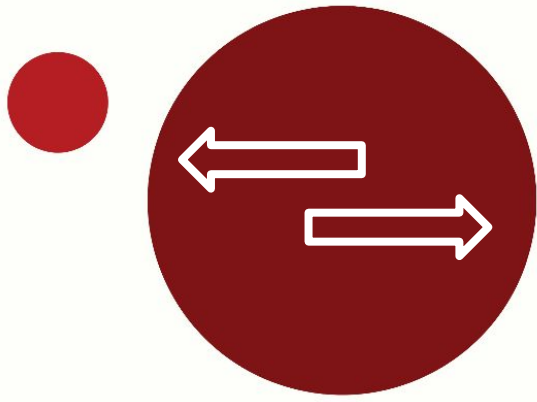
## SCENARIO

# 3

While the district has skilled and committed teachers, many may not have had previous opportunities to develop leadership skills or take on formal leadership positions. Some teachers may be hesitant to step into leadership roles due to a lack of confidence or uncertainty about their capabilities.

How might a superintendent develop teacher leadership among his staff?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?



# NAVIGATING A POLITICALLY DIVISIVE CLIMATE

## SCENARIO

# 1

You must address challenges related to book bans and censorship, navigating pressures from both parents and community groups with conflicting perspectives.

How might a superintendent create a supportive environment for teachers and learners to address sensitive topics while also respecting parental rights and community values?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

It is an election year and you are experiencing increased pressure from politically motivated groups targeting school board elections and promoting divisive candidates.

How might a superintendent maintain focus on district priorities amidst the distractions and pressures of highly politicized school board elections?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

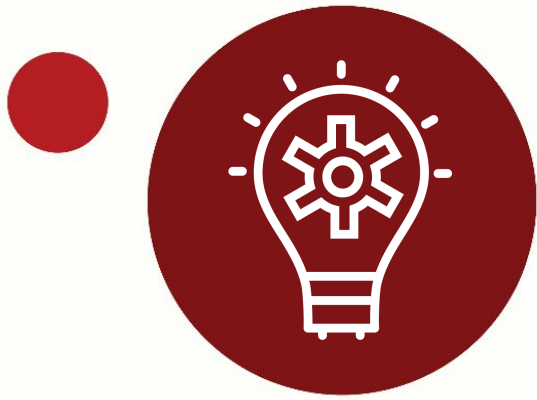
## SCENARIO

# 3

You are navigating the challenges of implementing a division-wide cell phone ban, balancing the mandate with the needs of students, staff, and parents, while addressing potential logistical and operational hurdles.

How might a superintendent collaborate with staff, parents, and community members to develop innovative solutions for addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the cell phone ban?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?



# MAINTAINING FOCUS ON HIGH IMPACT OUTCOMES

## SCENARIO

# 1

You are inundated with data from multiple sources, struggling to discern critical information from noise and make data-driven decisions that align with division goals.

How might a superintendent balance the need for in-depth data analysis with the urgency of making timely and impactful decisions?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 2

Members of your leadership team are easily distracted by new and innovative initiatives, often at the expense of core division priorities. These distractions can divert resources and attention away from critical areas of need.

How might a superintendent create a culture where innovation is encouraged while ensuring that resources are best spent on initiatives that align with the division's strategic goals?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?

## SCENARIO

# 3

The school board has a particular interest in a specific program that may not align with division-wide goals. You face pressure to prioritize this program over other essential areas, potentially compromising overall district effectiveness.

How might a superintendent facilitate a constructive conversation with the board?

As a coach, how might you approach this conversation with your superintendent?