

Instructional Leadership Development (Focused on Observation-Feedback Cycle)

TEA Strategic Priority:	#1—Recruit, Support, and Retain Teachers and Principals
Statutorily allowable use of funds:	Title II, Part A—Preparing, Training, Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Leaders, Principals, Other School Leaders: Develop or improve a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation and support system for teachers, principals; Offer high-quality, personalized, evidence-based PD to teachers, instructional leadership teams, principals, or other school leaders; Develop and provide PD to teachers, principals, or other school leaders to promote high-quality instruction and instructional leadership in STEM subjects.

Project Summary

Strong instructional leaders use a variety of tools to support teacher growth in alignment with their campus academic vision, the primary of which is the observation/feedback cycle. This is a cyclical process in which the campus leader acts as a coach, continually observing teacher practice and giving ongoing feedback to support teachers in their pursuit of short term and long term instructional goals. The development of instructional leadership around the observation/feedback cycle would include intentional training, along with ongoing opportunities for job-embedded practice and feedback.

An ongoing program of instructional leadership development, focused on the observation/feedback cycle, would support the Commissioner’s Strategic Priority to support and retain teachers and campus leaders. Research shows a direct correlation between strong instructional culture within a school and teacher retention rates, with schools with weak instructional culture losing twice as many of their effective teachers. The strongest indicators of a school’s instructional culture, according to research, include a belief that the school is committed to improving instructional practice, that teachers at the school share a common vision of what effective teaching looks like, and that the expectations for effective teaching are clearly defined. These indicators are all directly fostered by strong instructional leaders facilitating observation/feedback cycles.

Studies also suggest that schools with strong instructional leadership see greater academic outcomes for students. Observation/feedback cycles that are grounded in standards-based instruction are directly tied to growth in teacher practices. Therefore, as teachers develop in their instructional practices through intentional support and coaching by an instructional leader, they create opportunities for increased academic success for students. Often, though, competing priorities and an overwhelming workload can prevent campus leaders from dedicating the necessary time to their role as an instructional leader. In addition to finding the time for instructional coaching, the complexity of the task and lack of training and support in this area can pose ever greater challenges. Under a new vision of instructional leadership, the role of the campus leader would include a prioritization of ongoing coaching and support of teachers. To prepare and support campus leaders in this work, districts can give ongoing training and job-embedded support around best practices in observation and feedback through an instructional leadership development program.

LEA Financial Commitment (start-up and annual costs)*

See **Project Description** for financial considerations for instructional leadership development programs.

Potential financial commitments in the implementation of an instructional leadership development program may include:

- Initial and on-going training costs, including training design and staffing
- Staffing considerations, including personnel for ongoing support of campus leadership

- * *When possible, TEA staff has estimated costs by major expenditure categories used in the ESSA Consolidated Application and the Expenditure Reporting (ER) System. Costs, such as locally-determined salaries, benefits, and wages, could not be estimated.*

Project Description

An instructional leadership development program would ideally focus on the continual development of leaders' knowledge and skills around the observation/feedback cycle. Elements of an instructional leadership development program may include, but are not limited to:

- **Ongoing training of campus leadership focused on knowledge and skill building around the observation/cycle:** Training activities may include low inference evidence collection, coaching conversation frameworks, targeted feedback, deliberate practice, and individualized support. The T-TESS toolkit or locally designed evaluation systems can serve as common language around instructional best practice and may, therefore, be intentionally used in the design and implementation of such training. To develop and support campus leaders' skill around observation/feedback, training should be given at least yearly, though more opportunities for development throughout the year would be ideal.
- **Ongoing opportunities for campus leaders to practice the discrete skills of the observation/feedback cycle in both peer groups and within the context of their own campus:** Research shows that professionals are more likely to translate skills learned through training into their daily practice when they have many opportunities to practice and apply their new learning. Campus leadership working groups, professional learning communities, and instructional rounds could offer opportunities for campus leaders to intentionally practice skills with support and feedback.
- **Job-embedded support focused on coaching the instructional leader in their development around the observation/feedback cycle:** The job-embedded support could include root cause analysis, co-observation, modeling best practices, and ongoing feedback on campus leader implementation. In addition, job-embedded support should also take into consideration campus leadership workload and priorities, supporting campus leaders in organizing time and resources to maximize the time spent actively coaching and supporting teachers. Support could be offered by a principal supervisor, professional development department, and/or a district level instructional coaching task force.

An instructional leadership development program could, therefore, position campus leaders to:

- Establish common language and expectations around instructional best practices;
- Use a consistent coaching conversation framework that incorporates opportunities for teacher self-reflection, bite-sized, actionable feedback, and aligned practice;
- Foster a positive campus culture built on a foundation of strong instructional expectations;
- Prioritize time and tasks to spend at least 60% of their time actively coaching and supporting teachers through observation/feedback cycles;
- Target the individual and collective needs of teachers to ensure that all are growing in their effectiveness; and
- More clearly understand classroom, grade level, and campus wide trends and use this understanding to inform the allocation of time and resources.

Goals and Student Achievement Objectives

A program designed to develop campus leaders as instructional leaders, with a focus on the observation/feedback cycle, would include the following goals:

- Continuous development of campus leadership in their role as instructional leaders oriented towards observation and feedback as a pathway to improve instruction.
- Continuous growth and development of teachers.
- Increased student achievement

Expected Outcomes

A program designed to develop campus leaders as instructional leaders, with a focus on the observation/feedback cycle, would lead to increased student academic achievement. A study conducted by The New Teacher Project proved that the top 20% of teachers generate 5-6 more months of student growth in comparison to their peers. Developing instructional leaders with a focus on the observation/feedback cycle will generate more of these top leaders, who will in turn generate stronger results.

Additional example outcomes formatted as SMART goals (the percentage of _____ will increase from X% to Y% by Z) are:

- Increased % of effective teachers retained by fostering a strong instructional climate from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increased % of teachers expressing satisfaction on campus climate survey from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increased % of teachers meeting development goals from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increased % of time campus leaders spend focused on instruction and instructional outcomes from X% to Y% by Z.

How Will Success Be Measured and Data Sources Available

Examples of performance measures for the instructional leadership development program focusing on teacher achievement:

- Increased % of teachers growing in their instructional evaluation, T-TESS, or local equivalent from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increased teacher satisfaction, as shown by campus or LEA climate surveys, from X% to Y% by Z.
- Increased retention of effective teachers from X% to Y% by Z.

Examples of performance measures for the instructional leadership development program focusing on student achievement:

- Increased percentage of students passing a specific STAAR content area assessment from X% to Y% by Z.

Training and Support TEA Offers

The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System was developed by the Texas Education Agency with the goal of defining clear standards for instructional practice within the state of Texas. The T-TESS rubric and supporting materials can offer a common language and set of expectations around instructional practice, which may be used to support campus leaders in the facilitation of the observation/feedback cycle.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills available online from TEA give a clear standard for instructional outcomes for students within the state of Texas. The TEKS and their implementation should be the foundation of all instructional leadership development.

Additional resources regarding instructional leadership focusing on the observation/feedback cycle are in the **Resources** section below.

Required Activities or Components

The instructional leadership development program, with a focus on observation/feedback, includes three recommended components: ongoing training, aligned practice, and job-embedded feedback. Descriptions of each part can be found in the Program Description above.

Program Duration, Timeline, or Significant Milestones

The instructional leadership development program would be ongoing, focused on continual growth and development. A campus leader would engage in a cyclical process of training, aligned practice, and job-embedded feedback throughout their tenure.

Facilities and Resources to Support LEAs

The T-TESS framework, including the instructional rubric and aligned resources, is available to support the implementation of the instructional leadership development program. T-TESS appraisal training is offered by TEA through local Education Service Centers. LEAs can access T-TESS resources through the Teach for Texas site, as well.

Additional resources to support design and implementation are in the **Resources** section below.

Staffing Requirements for LEAs

Consider your district's capacity for training and ongoing support. Possible staffing to support the program could include:

- Principal supervisors
- District professional development departments
- Instructional coaching task force or equivalent (focuses would include T-TESS implementation and ongoing coaching support)

Additional consideration should be paid to campus leadership staffing to ensure effective teacher/leader ratios and campus leader workload.

Additional General Information LEA, Charter, or Other Organizations Need

In designing and implementing an instructional leadership development program, with a focus on observation and feedback, the following best practices should be taken into consideration:

- Establish clarity of language and expectations using an instructional practice rubric
- Offer a clear systematic structure for coaching conversations (see T-TESS materials and Resources section)
- Give bite-sized feedback that a teacher could successfully implement within the next week during the feedback conversation
- Offer opportunities for practice within the feedback conversation
- Focus on teacher development and support rather than evaluation during informal observation/feedback cycles

Additional consideration should be paid to the following logistical components when designing and implementing the instructional leadership development program:

- Consideration of leadership workload, giving leaders the ability to dedicate at least 60% of their time to instructional leadership tasks
- Reduced teacher to appraiser/coach ratio
- Expectation setting around the number of informal observations conducted with each teacher yearly
- Structured time built into the day for feedback conversations

Resources*

- Leverage Leadership, A Practice Guide to Building Exceptional Schools from [Uncommon Schools](#).
- [New Leaders](#)
- [The New Teacher Project](#)
- [The Relay Graduate School of Education](#)
- The UW [Center for Educational Leadership](#)
- [The Instructional Coaching Group](#)
- [Learning Forward](#)
- [Marzano Research](#)

* *TEA is offering the following information or link for reference purposes only, and TEA's provision of the information or link does not in any way constitute an endorsement by TEA.*