

Math Coaching Q and A

Full-time Math Coaches:

1. **Schedules:** gather a schedule from every teacher of math to facilitate the implementation of a full-coaching model (pre-conference, observation, and post-conference) with them this year.
2. **Formal Coaching;** conduct 8 coaching sessions a week, meeting with the same two teachers each day (for at least four days a week) to do a full-coaching model (meet with these same 2 teachers for four weeks and then begin with 2 different teachers for the next four week rotation). The teachers you work with will have indicated interest in this opportunity.
3. **Grade Level Teams:** meet with grade-level teams consistently (could be on that fifth day of each week).
4. **Informal Coaching and Other:** look for a possible model classroom, be available for teacher questions, look for possible Professional Development to offer staff, and assist with Learning Walks and the identified and planned PD.
5. **PLC Support:** Facilitate PLC work in your building.

Coaching is a Professional Development Opportunity!
“It refines math instruction that promotes student learning!”
(M. Burns)

What does it mean to do formal coaching?

Working with a coach means planning and learning together with the ultimate goal of refining math instruction thus promoting student learning. The teacher chooses goals of what implementation and/or content s/he wants to work on and the coach supports these goals through job-embedded professional development. Formal coaching focuses on the teacher’s goal(s), and includes a pre and post conference for each lesson taught, observation, demonstration/model lessons, co-teaching, and reflection on the lesson during a post conference. **It is a reflective practice.**

What is the difference between formal and informal coaching?

Formal coaching is a teacher and coach working together on an almost daily basis (for four weeks) with the format of the pre-conference, lesson, and post-conference. Informal coaching is supporting staff with math related questions and concerns about planning/delivering a lesson or logistical topics of classroom environment, organization of math materials, etc.

What is a model classroom?

A model classroom is a best practices classroom set up for job-embedded professional development purposes. It is a classroom where other teachers have the opportunity to observe the full implementation of all of the Everyday Math components and instructional strategies that improve student learning.

How much time should teachers spend with a math coach (what is the research)?

Coaches should meet with teachers *at least* 16 times (4 times per week for a month). Research shows that 15 continuous coaching sessions is substantial time for a teacher to have achieved their goals and move forward continuing their reflective practice

How can we mesh coaching time with teacher planning time?

Besides the usual times to meet (before/after school and prep time), schools are encouraged to get creative with time to meet. Scheduling requires that coaches and teachers be flexible and respectful. Coaching time is collaborative planning/reflecting time.

Will coaching be here today, gone tomorrow?

The District is committed to the coaching initiative and has invested heavily in this program. It is being implemented nationwide.

Why are coaches pulled from their schools for training?

Coaching is a relatively new initiative that the district is investing in. In order for this program to be successful our coaches need training in being effective coaching strategies. Math coaches will meet 2 half-days per month during the 2008-2009 school year. Meeting topics will focus on coaching skills, assessment, interventions, and the like. Attending math coach trainings/workshops is a district expectation and is written into the math coach job description.

What is the role of coach? What is the role of the teacher?

(SPPS has identified these and they are listed in the attached documents)

Where is the coach in the hierarchy of a school?

Coaches are teachers. They are not in a supervisory role, but may serve in a leadership capacity. **THEY ARE NOT EVALUATORS!** The relationship between a coach and a teacher is expected to include confidentiality and trust.

Does a coach work with students or flex groups?

The role of the coach is to increase student achievement by supporting the teacher's professional development. The coach is not there to work with individual or small groups of students unless it supports the professional development goals of the teacher in the formal coaching sessions. Observation of each other allows reflective conversation to build capacity for math instruction that improves student learning.

What balance should there be between observation, modeling, and co-teaching from a coach?

This depends on the professional development goals set by the teacher. The teacher and coach support the goal(s) identified using multiple approaches that are always preplanned, observed or taught, AND reflected upon. Questions and reflective conversations are critical parts of the process. The end result is the gradual release to the teacher. When the formal coaching sessions are complete, the expectation is that the teacher continues to implement their new learning, refine their math instruction, and continue the reflective process.

How can I use the math coach as a resource person?

Here are some possible ideas:

- analyze formative or common assessment to plan next steps for instruction
- assist with planning and organizing the math environment (standards-based bulletin boards, word walls)
- assist with choosing and planning activities for flex groups (struggling and enrichment)
- assist with creating a plan to organize flex groups (schedule, teaching materials organized including GAMES)
- discuss math content questions