NYC
LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

Remote Learning Check-Ins for Coaching Principals

Purpose: To provide guidance to coaches on how to provide support to principals in a remote learning environment while keeping a continual eye on equity.

Process: We recommend the following five-step process, to be repeated on a cyclical basis.

Creating the Conditions → The Check-In → Practice → Next Steps → Reflection

Step 1: Creating the Conditions *Before engaging in conversation, it is ideal that the conditions are created for a positive and productive discussion. The questions and actions below are suggestions to help craft the conditions and are not exhaustive. We suggest you start with the question, "What's the purpose of the conversation?" and make sure everything else aligns to that answer.*

What questions should the coach be thinking about?	What actions should the coach be taking?
Structure • What's the purpose of this conversation? • What are the equitable outcomes that I am looking for? • What do I know about this principal that I need to be mindful of when engaging with them? • How will I respond to the emotions that may come-up during this conversation? **Personal** • What biases may I bring into the conversation that I need to be conscious of? • What are my triggers and how will I respond if triggered? • How am I feeling about this current pandemic? What emotions are coming up for me? • How do I as a district leader empathize with the adults who I'm supporting without taking on so much of the burden that they're feeling that we become overwhelmed?	**Structure** • Send an agenda ahead of time • Mutually decide on the focus of the conversation • Mutually decide on type of meeting (length of meeting, phone call, on camera, etc.) • Vary the meeting time so principal can participate during their best time given demands in their household • Prepare a shared document to use moving forward to track conversations **Analysis** • Review any available school data, disaggregate by minoritized populations and note trends • Compile resources to provide to support the transition to remote learning • Identify trends from conversations with other principals to share • Note what kinds of online tools schools are using to stay connected with stakeholders

REMOTE LEARNING CHECK-IN TOOL

Step Two: The Check-In *In this section you are provided a list of possible questions to engage with a principal. The order of the areas of focus is intentional in order to continue to build the conditions and the remote relationships before diving into the roles and responsibilities of the principal. The check-in should also end with a personal check-in to recognize that principals are in the unknown and are experiencing trauma, so we want to be supportive to them as individuals. There are many questions offered here and we do not suggest you ask every question. Instead we suggest you ask yourself "What's the purpose of the conversation?" and choose the questions that align to your response.*

Areas of Focus	Questions
General Check-In	• How are you doing during this time of uncertainty? • What are your biases about remote learning? How might this affect the buy-in of teachers? • How are you feeling about social distancing? What's your response to the increased need for this? • (If a parent) How are you managing being a parent during this crisis? What are the connections to virtual learning – how might that inform the delivery of instruction, communication to parents, etc?
Focus on students	• How are creating a remote learning experience for students that centers their humanity? • How are you addressing student access to curriculum if they don't have access to computers, internet, tech support? • What does support look like for students who have IEPs, exceptional needs, or who live in an unsafe environment? • What data / evidence do you collect now to inform planning for next year – how you move students that are behind forward to where they need to be? How are you planning to address the needs of students who might fall further behind during remote schooling? • In what ways are inequities appearing in a surprising or unexpected way because of the current situation? Anything unanticipated that you're seeing with new eyes? • What are you planning to create healing in the school when eventually school returns? For interactions among students and from the experience of the pandemic? What does that look like? • Are school work and materials being appropriately translated so that non-English speaking parents can help their children with their school work? Are translators accessible to families that have questions and need additional assistance?
Focus on content & curriculum	• How are you eliminating any attendance, grading and other accountability structures for student learning that is not conducive to the current situation? • How are your teachers choosing content for your students to ensure its appropriate for the remote learning environment? • What is the role of teachers in providing curriculum resources for students? • How are you speaking about COVID-19 and the racist attacks on Asian students and families? • How are teachers integrating different mediums into their curriculum?
Focus on pedagogy	• What are the platforms you are using to maintain interactions with students? • How are you managing the different paces that students may be grasping materials on a new platform? • How are you engaging parents and families into the learning experience? • How are you assessing student learning and progress remotely and adjusting?
Focus on families	• How are you connecting with families to support them in supporting their children in remote learning? How are they experiencing those connections—where do they feel they are able to stay connected and what seems to be missing for them/their staff? For whom are the connections working/not working? What needs do they have? • Do all your students and families have access to mental and emotional support: online therapy, meditation, relaxation, arts, recreation, etc.? • Do any of your families need help accessing crisis supports such as food pantries, rent/mortgage/utility assistance, unemployment, etc.?

Areas of Focus	Questions
Focus on families (cont'd)	• Are any of your Asian students and families experiencing racism and need support? • What initiatives are the teachers in your community taking to engage with kids in a new way that isn't just virtual?
Focus on staff	• What are the platforms you are using to maintain interactions with teachers? • What are teachers experiencing/worrying about/discovering that can be shared? What support do they need?
Focus on learning and development, resilience	• What are you learning about yourself through this experience? • What biases are you showing up for your during this transition and how are you attending to them? • How are you using your privilege to support your students and families? • Now that you're not in the building seeing staff and students every day, what have you done to try to keep your energy / motivation at the level it needs to be? What are you doing, or will you do, to continue to build culture and relationships with staff and students? • While none of us is good at totally disconnecting, you likely now are working from home, and so it's even easier to be on 24/7. What strategies have you used to try to help yourself disconnect? • What do you need to do for yourself so that you can stay resilient? • Who can help hold you accountable to taking care of yourself?
Focus on teaming	• How do you help teacher teams and school leadership teams connect and support each other in this time of uncertainty and grief? • What norms/agreements/conditions do you need to adapt and/or create? • What is on your agenda? What would you prioritize in this time?

Step 3: Practice *The check-in is also an opportunity to help a principal problem-solve, strategize and practice. Below you will find a list of possible practices activities to engage in with a principal. In collaboration with the principal, you will want to choose a practice activity that will help build their skills and align to the purpose of your check-in.*

• Unpack a situation where a student has shared that they are struggling with being out of school due to safety in the home, inability to access the online curriculum provided and/or other circumstances
• Design a virtual check-in with a teacher without an in-person classroom observation experience - potential topics to discuss:
   • Observation of teacher office hours (are teachers doing flipped videos at this point)
   • How are teachers keeping track of student/family interactions? What is (in)equitable in approach – what is/is not meeting needs of all students? What could shift moving forward?
• Role play a virtual check-in with a teacher to discuss and give feedback on either what the leader has observed or reviewed in terms of materials
• Talk through a recent interaction with a student's family that was challenging
• Unpack a recent interaction with a staff member who was feeling overwhelmed or ineffective as they move to teaching virtually
• Support designing a schedule to work from home
• Unpack a situation where the leader felt overwhelmed and help them self-reflect on triggers
• Design an agenda for a team meeting virtually (SLT, PLCs, PTO, etc.)
• Look at the curricula being designed by teachers and work together to provide asset-based and criteria-informed feedback.
• Try out this technology together and problem-solve around any technology issues. Coach will be the student and try to engage with the task, the Zoom meeting, the breakout room, etc.

Step Four: Next Steps *In conjunction with the principal, take the time to reflect on the conversation, agree on next steps and welcome any feedback.*

- What are our agreed upon next steps and timeline for follow-up?
  - How can we hold each other accountable?
  - What support do you need from me?
- Let's share 1 glow and grow about this check-in.
- What worked and what didn't?
- What can we continue, start or stop doing to make this more effective/impactful?
- What is one step you will take to focus on yourself/stay resilient between now our next check in?
- What other feedback/recommendations do you have for me?

Step Five: Reflection *This last step of the check-in process in an opportunity for you to reflect on the conversation you just had and take note of any adjustments you need to make in the next check-in.*

- How did I respond to any biases shared by the principal?
- What biases showed up for me during the conversation and how did I respond?
- What support will I be providing after the conversation? (link to NYCLA resources?)
- What feedback did I receive about the conversation?
- What trends/patterns am I noticing and how can that inform my next steps?
- What do I need to learn and/or do to support my principals in being effective CRIL with respect to remote/virtual learning?

References Used:

Aguilar, Elena. *Art of Coaching*
Aguilar, Elena. *Onward*
NYU Metropolitan Center guide on culturally responsive remote learning. https://crehub.org/remote-learning