Building Distributive Leadership Capacity → **Planning and Rollout** → Driving Instructional Improvement → Reflecting and Making Adjustments

Invest Early to Provide Strong 1:1 Support to Teachers

Who Is the Primary Audience for This Guide? Senior/Team Leads and Other Teacher Leaders

When Is This Guide Most Useful? Spring/Summer Planning through Beginning of the School Year

Vision of Excellence

Effective Senior/Team Leads have strong, goal-driven relationships with each of the teachers on their teams. They build these relationships intentionally and early: Establishing trust, aligning vision and purpose, and developing goals together. Senior/Team Leads engage the teachers they support to design and execute learning cycles and provide a variety of supports to enable teachers to reach their goals. Strong Senior Team/Leads understand the limitations of their role, steer clear of micromanaging teachers, and leverage their school leaders when necessary.

Essential Questions

- How do Senior/Team Leads establish effective working relationships with the individual teachers on their teams?
- How do Senior/Team Leads lead the teachers they support to set and monitor ambitious goals for their students and drive their own professional growth?
- How do Senior/Team Leads effectively launch their first set of learning cycles with the teachers on their teams?

Objective 1: Establish and Maintain Strong Working Relationships with Teachers

Key Action Steps

- ✓ **Conduct individual beginning-of-year conversations with teachers**
  - Deliver welcome cards or send e-mails to each of the teachers on your team in advance of your first meeting. Convey your excitement for working with them and your hopes for the year.
  - When you meet, revisit the school's vision for distributive leadership and goals for the year and explicitly connect them to your team's goals. Preview the process for setting individual goals.
  - Use a getting to know you template to understand each teacher's working style. Review their responses prior to your beginning of year conversations with individual teachers. If possible, conduct these one-on-one conversations in a relaxed, informal setting.
  - Provide an overview of your new role (e.g., coach, consultant, facilitator and evaluator). Ask teachers about their expectations for you as a leader and answer questions they may have about your role, function or working relationship. Consider how you and the teachers you support will introduce your relationship and work to students.
- ✓ **Establish regular 1:1s with teachers to strengthen working relationships**
  - Schedule weekly or bi-weekly 1:1 meetings with each teacher. Use a shared calendar with other members of the ILT to create transparency related to observations and other demands on teachers.
  - Differentiate the focus and activities of these 1:1 meetings throughout the learning cycle. You might spend time co-planning, debriefing an observation, or co-observing another class. While activities might vary, be sure to establish a regular time for your 1:1 meetings.
  - Use a collaborative tool to house 1:1 agendas. Ask teachers to drive creation of the agenda, and encourage them to lead the 1:1 meetings.
  - At the end of each meeting, clarify next steps with clear deadlines, and request feedback on the structure and content of the conversation. Adjust the agenda and meeting schedule when necessary.
- ✓ **Build coaching norms and routines**
  - Ask teachers about their initial coaching and observation preferences. Sample questions could include: Where do you want me to be when I observe? Would it be distracting if I talk to students, walk around the classroom, or offer to co-teach or model? As their comfort with observation increases, add new strategies, as appropriate.
  - Provide a draft coaching agreement for each teacher to sign.
  - Build a coaching cycle calendar and template with each teacher that includes components of learning cycles (e.g, 1:1 meetings, LEAP observations and additional coaching sessions).

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- Use your school's approach for planning feedback meetings (e.g., cognitive coaching planning/reflection maps or Relay's 6 Steps).
- ✓ **Request additional support, as needed**
  - If any of the relationships present challenges or concerns, especially early on, raise them with your ILT or school leader mentor. Discuss possible solutions and next steps with mentors and peers in a safe, confidential space.
  - Keep your school leader updated on challenges that arise and request intervention if necessary.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The **Denver Public Schools' Culture, Equity, and Leadership Team provides values-based leadership development and training opportunities** to support district leaders in their work. The DPSAspire program is a 2-day experience that is the perfect chance for Senior/Team Leads to work with others in the district as they think about their own leadership styles, the process of building strong relationships with team members, and leading for change and equity through values.

Objective 2: Refine individual goals for professional growth and student achievement

Key Action Steps

- ✓ **Invest teachers in school-wide and team goals**
  - Discuss school-wide and team goals with teachers, and invite feedback on the content. If any teachers are in a non-tested subject, clarify how their individual goals for student growth will connect to the team and school-wide goals.
  - Ensure access to and understanding of resources and systems that teachers and leaders must use for SLO and PGP data.
- ✓ **Support teachers to write and refine individual goals**
  - Use the LEAP framework to support individual goal setting for the year, and provide templates for teachers to describe their goals.
  - Consider having all teachers on your team select at least one common indicator to focus on together.

Objective 3: Draft and Execute First Learning Cycle

Key Action Steps

- ✓ **Set intention for the learning cycle**
  - **Support teams/teachers to select meaningful goals using multiple data points.** Senior/Team Leads and each team/teacher should jointly select and prioritize a goal based on multiple qualitative and quantitative data points. Consider multiple sources, including school goals, student data and observation feedback.
  - **Define success indicators.** Senior/Team Leads and teams/teachers should determine what success looks like, using the Framework for Effective Teaching as a guide. Key questions to ask: What will it look like when I am successful? What will my peers and support team notice is different? What changes will I see/hear in my students?
- ✓ **Engage teams/teachers in related learning**
  - **Determine with your team/teachers how they would like to learn.** Learning approaches could include book or article studies, co-observing another teacher live or via video, modeling leading a classroom while your teacher observes, co-planning a lesson or unit, providing real time coaching or meta-coaching.
  - **Discuss how they will apply the learning.** This could be designing instruction based on learnings and/or implementing new ideas or skills with students. Teachers should plan to make 1-2 high leverage adjustments and assess growth and impact, for example, via video or observations.
  - **Observe your teachers in action** to gauge their effectiveness in implementing key learnings, providing actionable coaching and feedback. Consider how you might use collaborative team time to group teachers with similar challenges or to address common problems of practice in instruction.
  - **Consider multiple methods of collecting classroom data**, including using classroom data trackers, assessing scripted questions against Bloom's Taxonomy, and working together to assess learning through student work.

✓ **Engage teams/teachers in evaluation and/or reflection**
- ▪ **Co-reflect with each teacher**. At the close of the learning cycle, engage each teacher in a more structured reflection process. Teachers should reflect on themselves, the learning cycle process and their students.
- ▪ **Provide feedback and plan for the next cycle**. If applicable, offer more formalized feedback on a specific indicator. Consider whether the goal has been met, and whether to develop a new goal for the next cycle.

Refer to the Learning Cycle Overview in the LEAP Handbook for more detail and key questions to ask during this process.