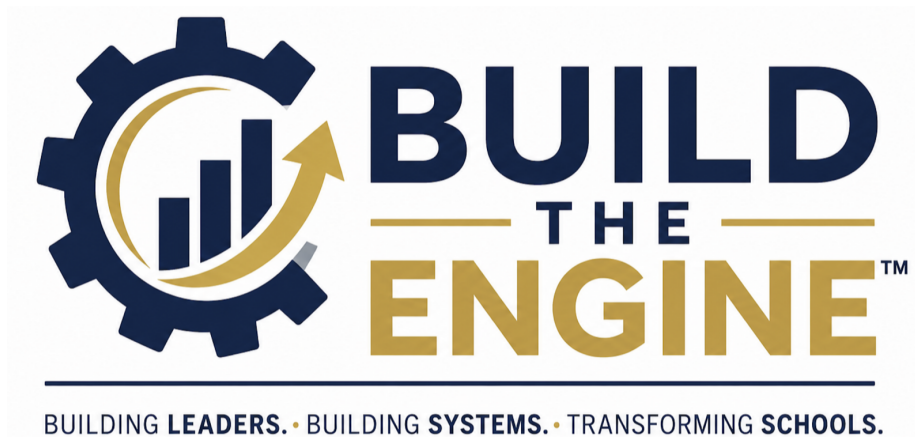




LEADERSHIP ESSENTIAL NO. 003

# Teacher Work Week Coaching Guide

Preparing Teachers for an Exceptional First Day of School

## LEADER COACHING MOVE

### Purpose

Teacher Work Week establishes expectations, builds culture, strengthens instructional systems, and prepares every teacher for success before students arrive. This guide helps principals, deans, coaches, and leadership teams coach readiness, not simply inspect compliance.

### What Excellence Looks Like

Great schools do not open successfully because classrooms look good. They open successfully because leaders intentionally coach teachers to build strong systems before students arrive.

# How to Use This Guide

Use each section during Teacher Work Week walkthroughs, teacher check-ins, grade-level planning, and leadership team calibration. The goal is to coach teachers toward confident systems before students arrive.

## **Leader Use Protocol**

- Observe the look-fors first.
- Ask the coaching question before giving advice.
- Name one strength and one next move.
- Return within 24-48 hours to check whether the system improved.

# Section 1: Classroom Environment

## Look Fors

|                                                                        |                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom is clean, organized, and welcoming. | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology is functioning properly.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student desks are intentionally arranged.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor charts support learning.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher workspace is organized.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom expectations are posted.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom library is accessible.              | <input type="checkbox"/> Student work areas are prepared.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies are organized and labeled.           | <input type="checkbox"/> The classroom communicates warmth and high expectations. |

### LEADER COACHING MOVE

#### Focus on the Student Experience

Instead of asking, "Is your classroom ready?" ask: "Walk me through what a student experiences during the first five minutes after entering your classroom."

### LEADER COACHING MOVE

#### Observe Before Advising

Before giving feedback, spend time observing the classroom through a student's eyes. Ask what communicates belonging, what might confuse students, and what routines are already obvious.

### Common Leadership Mistakes

- Focusing on decorations instead of functionality.
- Correcting before asking questions.
- Assuming organization equals readiness.
- Overlooking accessibility for students.

#### What Excellence Looks Like

Students enter a classroom that immediately communicates safety, organization, belonging, and excitement for learning.

## Section 2: Classroom Systems

### Look Fors

|                                                             |                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning routine established.       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil routine.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entry procedure practiced.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent work expectations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention signal identified.       | <input type="checkbox"/> Small-group procedures.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom expectations established. | <input type="checkbox"/> End-of-day procedures.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Materials distribution routine.    | <input type="checkbox"/> Dismissal procedures.          |

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Practice Every Routine

Have teachers physically rehearse routines with colleagues before students arrive.

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Stress-Test Every System

Ask: What happens if three students need help at once? What happens if technology fails? What happens if a new student arrives unexpectedly? Strong systems work even when something unexpected happens.

#### Common Leadership Mistakes

- Assuming routines will naturally develop.
- Teaching procedures only once.
- Creating complicated systems.

#### What Excellence Looks Like

Students know what to do without waiting for adult direction.

## Section 3: Instruction

### Look Fors

|                                                            |                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans completed.           | <input type="checkbox"/> Exit tickets prepared.                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards identified.             | <input type="checkbox"/> Small groups identified.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning targets posted.          | <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention planned.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Success criteria identified.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Student discourse opportunities included. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checks for understanding planned. | <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement strategies planned.            |

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Teach the Lesson to Me

Ask the teacher to teach the first five minutes of tomorrow's lesson. This allows leaders to coach clarity, pacing, and questioning before students arrive.

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Start With Student Thinking

Instead of asking, "What are you teaching?" ask: "What do you want students to think about, discuss, and understand by the end of this lesson?"

#### Common Leadership Mistakes

- Focusing only on lesson completion.
- Ignoring student engagement.
- Planning without considering misconceptions.

#### What Excellence Looks Like

Instruction is intentional, engaging, standards-based, and responsive to student needs.

## Section 4: Student Culture

### Look Fors

|                                                                                 |                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher greets every student by name.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions are efficient.                                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students know where to go immediately.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Students feel psychologically safe.                                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning routines begin within two minutes.             | <input type="checkbox"/> School-wide expectations are consistent.                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students appear welcomed and valued.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway, cafeteria, restroom, arrival, and dismissal expectations are reinforced. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom expectations are visible and referenced.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Adults actively supervise students.                                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positive teacher language exceeds corrective language. | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive recognition is visible throughout the building.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students have classroom responsibilities.              | <input type="checkbox"/> Every student participates and receives immediate feedback.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students know how to ask for help.                     |                                                                                                            |

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Observe Students Before Teachers

Spend the first three minutes watching students. Ask: Do students know what to do? Are routines automatic? Does the classroom feel calm? Students reveal the strength of classroom systems.

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Coach the Experience

Instead of saying, "Your expectations are not posted," ask: "How will students know what success looks like before they make a mistake?"

#### Common Leadership Mistakes

- Praising quiet classrooms instead of engaged classrooms.
- Focusing on compliance over belonging.
- Waiting until behavior problems occur before coaching.
- Looking only at teacher actions instead of student responses.

#### What Excellence Looks Like

Students feel safe, connected, challenged, and valued while consistently meeting school-wide expectations regardless of the classroom they enter.

# Section 5: Family Partnership

## Look Fors

|                                                                   |                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome letter prepared.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom newsletter ready.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family communication system established. | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive communication plan developed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent contact information verified.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Family expectations communicated.      |

### LEADER COACHING MOVE

#### Five Positive Contacts

Challenge every teacher to make five positive family contacts during the first week of school.

### LEADER COACHING MOVE

#### Belonging Before Concern

Ask: "How will every family know that they belong in your classroom before the first concern ever arises?"

### Common Leadership Mistakes

- Contacting families only when problems occur.
- Inconsistent communication.
- Waiting too long to build trust.

#### What Excellence Looks Like

Families feel welcomed, informed, respected, and connected from the very beginning.

## Section 6: Data Readiness

### Look Fors

|                                                 |                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student data reviewed. | <input type="checkbox"/> 504 plans reviewed.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading data analyzed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance history reviewed.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Math data analyzed.    | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior history reviewed.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IEPs reviewed.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention groups identified. |

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Connect Data to Students

Connect every piece of data to a student, not just a spreadsheet.

#### LEADER COACHING MOVE

##### Name Students Before School Starts

Ask teachers to identify three students who may excel, three who may require intervention, and three who need intentional relationship-building.

#### Common Leadership Mistakes

- Reviewing data without creating action plans.
- Waiting until assessments to intervene.

#### What Excellence Looks Like

Teachers understand their students before instruction begins and proactively plan supports.



# Build the Engine Leadership Challenge

## LEADER COACHING MOVE

### Three-Minute Student Lens

Visit five classrooms on the 3rd day of school. Spend the first three minutes watching only the students. Write down everything students reveal about the strength of the classroom systems before looking at the teacher. Then ask the teacher: What did you notice? Compare observations and coach through questions before offering solutions.

## Final Reflection

### Before Students Arrive, Ask Yourself

- Are teachers ready, or simply prepared?
- Have I inspected more than I have coached?
- What conversations will have the greatest impact before Day One?
- Which teacher needs encouragement?
- Which teacher needs clarity?

### What Excellence Looks Like

Great leaders do not spend Teacher Work Week checking boxes. They spend it building confident teachers, strong systems, and a culture that will sustain success all year long.

Building Leaders. Building Systems. Transforming Schools.