

Instructional Partnership Initiative (IPI)

Getting Started

Establishing IPI in your school involves three key processes: finalizing matches, setting expectations for IPI partners, and supporting IPI throughout the year. The recommendations below emerged from site visits to schools implementing IPI last year. You may also find it helpful to talk with other IPI principals.

Finalizing Matches

The suggested teacher matches you see in the portal are based on rubric, indicator-level evaluation data based on teachers' strengths and areas of growth on specific instructional practice areas. Use these data to finalize matches, while also trying to match based on similar grade/subject area, teaching schedules that support time for IPI, and existing, positive working relationships between partners.

Setting expectations for IPI partners

It is important to introduce IPI to teachers and provide focal indicators and clear expectations for partnerships.

- **Introduce IPI to teachers.** Describe IPI's goals and explain how teachers were matched. Begin by meeting with teachers individually and emphasizing that IPI is about development on specific indicators and not about overall effectiveness.
- **Focus on indicators.** Provide the specific indicator(s) on which you want each partnership to focus. IPI is intended to help teachers improve on specific teacher evaluation indicators.
- **Clarify expectations for partnership activities:** IPI is designed with built-in flexibility for you to adapt it to your school context. We learned last year that teachers appreciated getting concrete expectations from their principals about what they should do together. See Getting Started with Partnerships for ways to provide clear expectations for partnerships.

Support IPI throughout the year

IPI should be a supported and visible component of professional learning in your school.

- **Provide resources:** Provide substitutes, teacher aids, or other resources for participating teachers so they have time to meet and observe each other. Print out the IPI guidebook for teachers and provide a link to the IPI teacher website. Ask teachers to share how they are addressing challenges.
- **Integrate into your evaluation process:** Use evaluation post-conferences to follow up with participating teachers on the focal indicators. Use IPI as a vehicle for teachers to make action plans for their refinement areas. Include IPI participation as evidence for the teacher professionalism rubric.

- **Follow up with IPI teachers:** Check in with participating teachers every other month with an informal conversation or email. If teachers have difficulty finding time to meet, help them address challenges, for example, by providing substitutes.
- **Make IPI visible in your school:** Ask teachers to provide examples of what they are learning, and have participating teachers share with each other about their practices and experiences at faculty meetings. Ask teachers to discuss how they use resources to address challenges, such as time.

Getting Started with Partnerships

The Instructional Partnership Initiative (IPI) is an approach to personalized professional learning and collaboration that focuses on improving teaching practices. It focuses on specific indicators within the observation rubric to match teachers as partners. Teachers then work together and decide how they want to address targeted observation indicators. The recommendations below emerged from site visits to schools implementing IPI last year.

How matches were made

IPI is not a coaching or mentoring relationship, but a partnership in which teachers bring unique perspectives that allow each teacher to grow professionally and learn from one another. Matches are made using data-based input from the Tennessee Department of Education and personal knowledge of you and your partner's time, expertise, and personalities from your principal. The department provided your principal with suggested matches based on areas of strength and growth based on last year's observation rubric indicators. Your principal then made final match decisions based on knowing more detailed information about your school and colleagues.

Partnership activities

Last year, teachers who met regularly with their partner and engaged in specific partnership activities like peer observation and reviewing lesson plans reported that IPI helped them grow as professionals and improve their teaching.

- **Set goals for focal indicator.** IPI is intended to help teachers improve on specific teacher observation rubric indicators. In your first partnership meeting, discuss the indicator(s) your principal gave you as a focus and set goals for what you hope to get out of the partnership. Establish plans related to improving on the focal indicator.
- **Establish a regular meeting time:** Effective partnerships had some interaction at least every other week. Establish a standing meeting time. If you do not have common planning time, ask your principal for resources to help you find time. You should use these times to prepare for and reflect on other activities, such as peer observations.
- **Engage in observations and other partnership activities:** Observe your partner and review your partner's lesson plans. In all activities, focus on providing actionable feedback to your partner regarding your focal indicator.
- **Use resources:** Use substitutes or other resources provided by your principal to find time to observe each other. If you do not share common planning time, use those resources to find time to meet. Use the IPI teacher guidebook for examples of how partners may support each other.