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**Continuous Staff Development is Our Goal
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***Professional Coaching:
Principal Coaching***

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Principal Coaches

As the focus of education shifts to a more learner-centered approach that requires teachers to change long standing teaching practices (Nelson & Hammerman qtd. in Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin 1995), the role of the principal is changing from manager to instructional leader. Behar-Horenstein and Ornstein describe this change in *Curriculum, Instruction, and Supervision: Essential Leadership Roles for Principals* saying "that principals for the 21st century will need to be able to cope with change processes and challenges associated with educating diverse student populations and recognize the need for a broadened participation in the leadership process. Rather than operating in isolation with little input from their faculty, principals must recognize the need for the help

and cooperation from each...stakeholder" (Behar-Horenstein & Ornstein qtd. in Sullivan & Glanz Spring 2000).

However, the role of instructional leader is new to most principals. This is especially true for new or novice principals, so "the national principals' organizations...have called for induction programs for novice principals that include processes like mentoring and coaching...(and this kind of support should not be limited to novice principals.) It is clear that experienced principals also need ongoing support and professional development, and that a coach or mentor can be a key element of this process" (ERS, 2000 qtd. in Bloom, Castagna & Warren 2003).

Some districts have recognized this fact and have used in-house mentors for years which may lead you to wonder about the relationship between mentoring

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and coaching. "Mentoring is one form of coaching, but not all coaching is mentoring. In general, mentoring is when an experienced teacher or administrator provides information to a newcomer, sharing experience and knowledge and expertise with someone who has less of these things. Coaching, on the other hand, is a continuous growth process for people of all experience levels" (Harwell-Kee, Kathryn Summer 1999).

Both processes are important and have their place in education, but there are some inherent difficulties involved in the mentoring process especially for administrators who are mentored by colleagues in the same district. For one thing, "it may be difficult for them to share confidences" (Bloom, Castagna & Warren 2003) with their colleagues.

Secondly, their "mentors are usually tied to their own

demanding jobs" and "may not have the time to focus on their protégés' needs (even) though they may have the best of intentions" (Bloom, Castagna & Warren 2003) to do so. Nor do "these relationships generally...provide a coherent mentoring process that is focused upon instructional leadership" (Bloom, Castagna & Warren 2003) because in many cases that role is new to the mentor as well as to the novice principal.

Therefore, as Bloom, Castagna, and Warren point out, perhaps all principals "need an external coach as a source of confidential and expert support around the wide-ranging, problematic, and often deeply personal issues that they must deal with from their first days on the job" (Bloom, Castagna & Warren 2003) and continue to deal with throughout their careers as they develop their own highly effective instructional leadership

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styles that help motivate their schools to become highly productive learning-centered communities where everyone is focused on student achievement. Therefore, principal coaching benefits everyone—the whole school community profits by having the principal be a highly effective instructional leader.

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