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Christie L. McMullen

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CONSISTENT COACHING AND ALIGNMENT FOR COLLEGE READINESS

SYSTEM STAFF:

A CHANGE LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Christie L. McMullen

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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This document was created as one part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

**Works Cited**


4.21.14
ABSTRACT

As an answer to a missing system of interaction and accountability between College Readiness System (CRS) Staff and school systems across the country, a coaching framework was created. This framework provides a repeatable, consistent model for CRS staff members to use with each school implementing CRS across the nation. This paper outlines the new coaching framework, the need for having a framework and the process for getting all stakeholders to support the new system. This process would be applicable for implementing any type of change within a large non-profit organization. This change leadership project includes ways to get organizations to embrace a new way of work, opportunities for getting internal stakeholders to buy into change, and chances to calibrate systems organization-wide.
PREFACE

As the Eastern Division Liaison for CRS, my role is to create systems that can be used organizationally to bring unity to the work done in all divisions. The unity of this work will allow for consistency of product across the nation, in this case, in interactions with schools and districts nationally. I work directly with CRS staff members who interact with external partners about their implementation of the College Readiness System. This consistency in work directly affects 6200 schools across the nation.

Throughout this process, I have learned much about my leadership style as well as how to lead others in a positive direction. I had to convince others that a new way of work was worthy of doing without having the positional power to make it happen. I used Kotter’s theory to first create urgency and then convince leaders of the validity of the change. The creation of buy in and realities of perceptions helped me become a more influential leader even when I was leading people above my pay grade.

I also learned that leading by example allows others to follow with intentionality. I showed people the value of the coaching framework by using it alongside them rather than just telling people why it was valuable. Great leaders must be willing to carry out actions rather than just tell others to do so.

The lessons I learned in writing this paper will carry forward with me in all future leadership positions because what I learned transfigures job title. I learned that creating change in any environment must be soundly framed in purpose. If people understand the value of the change they are more likely to employ it even if it is not being monitored. I also learned that monitoring the use of the change is paramount for long term consistency. In addition to monitoring use, providing proper ongoing, job-embedded
training equips employees for success with the change, therefore enhancing the impact of the change.

I have witnessed this change going from an idea to a way of work in the organization. That shift has shown me that change can be made without positional authority as long as the purpose and direction is clear and well placed. If the good of the organization and its partners remains at the forefront, the change can be sustainable and mutually beneficial for all.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate this project to my family, who supported my long days and late nights, picked up the slack when I needed to buckle down, and helped me keep things in perspective throughout the last three years. I wanted to be an example to my children and show them what hard work and diligence can bring. They not only cared for me, but learned a few of their own lessons along the way.

Jason, thank you for making sure I had everything I needed to take this journey through to completion. I am very lucky to have such a loving and supportive husband and best friend. I know I could not have done this without your unwavering support and love. I love you very much.

Jackson and Chloe, thank you for understanding that this process took time and energy, but that it was a means to an end. I did this, in part, to show you that you can do absolutely anything you set your mind to do. Do not ever let anything or anyone stand in the way of making your dreams a reality. I cannot wait to cheer you on as you begin your journey towards your future. You both make me incredibly proud.

Brenda, Fred, Sue and Claude (aka Mom, Pop, Mom and Dad) thank you for believing in me and reminding me that I can do anything. Thank you for demonstrating that dedication accomplishes goals. Thank you for celebrating milestones with me. Thank you for loving me unconditionally.

My dear colleagues, thank you for listening to me when I was frustrated. Thank you for reading my papers and giving me guidance and advice. Thank you for supporting this crazy dream. Thank you for helping this research become reality. I am very blessed to have you in my world.
When I started this process, I set out to accomplish something epic, to become a doctor. During the process, I learned more about myself and who I am as a learner and as a person than I ever dreamed I would. Now that the process is ending, I realize that my next adventure will allow me to reach new heights, and it will not scare me, but instead inspire me. I cannot wait to see what is next.
DEDICATION

To my amazing family. For believing in me when I did not even believe in myself.
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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 1979, Ron Edmonds, a national leader in the Effective Schools Movement, wrote,

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far. (p. 23)

Today we must ask ourselves why we continue to have classrooms where instruction is stagnated and where students are not engaged or held responsible for their own learning. Ruling out a lack of desire on the part of dedicated educators to provide high quality instruction that prepares students for college and career, we need to look at other reasons for our continued lack of success in our nation’s public-school classrooms. I believe it comes down to a lack of systemic implementation of instructional best practices built around common and consistent purposes, training and support for teachers and school administrators.

My paper examines a system that provides a coaching framework for providing support to teachers and administrators that focuses on the delivery of high quality instructional practices schoolwide and that results in students taking responsibility for their own learning. This system is called the College Readiness System (CRS). CRS is a pseudonym for the purposes of this paper. Implementation of the CRS is undergoing the stress of change inherent to organizational change and expansion. In order for the CRS to be the most effective, the capacity of CRS’s internal staff support must keep pace with
the needs in the field when implementing the system. I will focus on building a model of internal support and training for CRS employees for this change analysis.

The idea for this project started in September 2015, when I, along with three colleagues were tasked with creating a consistent protocol for working with districts. Between September and December, I gathered information from different program staff members about how things were done in regards to working with districts. We created a prototype that we called a coaching framework, and asked a pilot group of about 30 program staff members to use it with their partners. I started writing about my change project in January 2016, informing the direction of the pilot group through conversations and data gathering.

We collected feedback from the pilot group between January and April and then trained the entire staff in the coaching framework during a two-day training in April. This training provided tools for our staff to use as they engaged with districts implementing the College Readiness System. In August 2016, I surveyed the entire program staff to get a baseline for their perceptions of the coaching framework, since they had not yet implemented all the pieces of the framework with districts. In September 2016, we trained the staff again, filling in gaps that I discovered from the survey. The expectation from the organization was that all program staff members use the coaching framework to structure and execute their interactions with districts. I surveyed the program staff again in December 2016 to see how their perceptions had shifted, if at all, since the beginning of the semester. The execution of this change has happened in tandem with the writing of this paper. My research shaped the changes in
our organization to best meet the needs of our program staff and our external partners, based on the needs of those implementing the change.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CRS approved this change project. She sees value in aligning our work as program staff members and has given me permission to train our staff to all use a consistent coaching framework. The Executive Vice President (EVP) in charge of the program staff has given time and resources to train our program staff in the framework. The organization’s governing body has given full support of this change.

**Problem**

A brief understanding of what College Readiness System is and does will be helpful in analyzing the current practice and needed changes. CRS serves approximately 1 million students across the nation, in 3361 secondary schools, in 44 states and 16 countries. The organization is divided into four divisions, A, B, C and D and a Headquarters located in San Diego, CA (source withheld to protect anonymity). The entire organization employs 233 staff members who work directly with K-12 school districts and colleges to provide an instructional system of support and research based professional learning opportunities. The people who work in the divisions work directly with school districts serving students from kindergarten to college, through research based professional learning opportunities and ongoing support through the College Readiness System (CRS).

These 233 staff members include CRS program managers and state directors who come from a variety of education backgrounds ranging from teacher to superintendent, with varying levels of experience and expertise. Their responsibility is to support
districts in their planning and execution of the CRS so that students reap the benefits of improved teaching and learning.

The CRS program managers work directly with a school district employee who has been designated as the District Director (DD) to assist with the implementation of the CRS and work directly with their schools implementing the CRS. The CRS’s policy requires 12 days of training throughout a 12 to 24-month period for the DD as part of the contractual agreement with the district. The training is considered by the CRS to be critical for making sure that the DD is well versed in the CRS and can be the CRS resident expert for the district. This training is called CRS District Leadership (CRSDL).

Though a program manager is assigned to a district and expected to provide support to the district, the organization has not specified particular parameters around the provision of that support. In the current model of CRS’s support to districts, the CRS program manager may visit a school district several times a year. The purpose of those visits is to coach the DD, principals, and teachers in the implementation of the CRS. However, the CRS program manager may not visit all schools.

There is no specified number of visits or requirement for what the CRS program manager should do during a visit, or even who should receive coaching support. Program staff can have as many as 150 schools to support, making getting into each school consistently nearly impossible. Therefore, the support a district receives in the current model is dependent on the expertise and availability of the CRS program manager assigned to that district, rather than intentional training built around specific expectations. The latter would include systematic, well-constructed sets of guidelines, procedures, and resources, along with training in coaching the adults involved with implementation in a
district designed to improve instruction and learning. This translates into a lack of consistency and quality of service to schools and school districts.

Over the 35 years that CRS has been in existence, the organization has expanded from a small group of people who lived and worked closely together, to a nationwide organization employing over 200 people. In the beginning years of CRS, a small group of staff members could share their expertise and service delivery ideas, challenges, and approaches with client partners. Now the number of CRS staff and their geographic locations make this type of communication difficult to navigate successfully. While there have been attempts to provide training in what districts might need to be successful, there has never been a unified, required model for how to support districts implementing the CRS, who to coach in the school district, or how to set specific outcomes for success in the implementation of the CRS. CRS program managers receive “on the job” training provided by other program managers or by their supervisors.

It is this lack of training and shared coaching protocols that is in need of change and improvement. Currently, there is a lack of institutional structure and consistency of delivery in the implementation of support provided to CRS district partners. In addition, the variance in coaching provides inconsistent results.

In March of 2015, under new leadership, CRS leaders decided to poll the internal staff in the field to see what the staff saw as their biggest needs and areas of growth. Eighty-seven percent of those polled said the number one need was a consistent coaching model. The model should help determine who to coach, when to coach them, why coach them. It should also include what results are expected a result of using what CRS calls
The “coaching framework.” The term coaching refers to the support and assistance that our CRS program managers provide to our CRS school districts.

The problem I will address in this study involves the importance of common processes and procedures in supporting and coaching school districts in their implementation of the CRS. Currently, the system lacks consistency in the services that each CRS program manager gives to his external partners (school districts). The company staff needs consistent training for how to coach districts as well as a consistent framework for working with school district DDs.

How might CRS staff address the variability in the implementation of the CRS? It can impact the coaching and support that each district receives around implementation of CRS. One approach is to provide direction to the CRS program managers as to whom they should focus their coaching/support within the school districts. The purpose would be to create a toolkit for CRS program managers. These could be used with districts to provide clear guidance on how to support and coach their districts to implement the CRS at all levels, and to provide training to all CRS program managers on coaching and support. However, the CRS program manager is only one piece to the CRS implementation puzzle. As a supplement to the training, the school district DD and school level staff receives professional learning experiences. The latter can be very powerful if the coach is equipped to drive the district towards their set goals.

In order to do this, the CRS needs a coaching support model that is the same throughout the United States. It should be one that produces replicable and scalable support to our CRS partner school districts specifically targeted to program managers and state directors. This support must include training in how to coach districts toward
successful implementation and sustainability of the CRS in their districts. It must also include having the DD and the CRS program manager setting goals together for the district to meet throughout the year. As a result of the change, CRS program managers and state directors would then be equipped to provide consistent coaching to CRS school district directors (DDs). This coaching would be centered around school or district level goals for student achievement set by the senior leadership and led by the DD.

If the CRS staff creates and adopts a consistent coaching framework to be used with all external partners (school districts), then the fidelity of CRS implementation will increase and the understanding and embedding of CRS strategies and practices will be noticeable throughout the district. Our CRS program managers will feel more confident in their daily interactions with districts and the school district DDs will set goals for their CRS implementation which the CRS program managers and DDs will intentionally share and monitor together, helping to make strides towards meeting them.

One of the key components of a new coaching framework for CRS program managers would include setting SMART goals with the DD to help intertwine the initiatives of the district and the CRS essentials for a more focused plan for implementation. Setting specific goals will allow the district to hone in on desired outcomes and will provide a mechanism for knowing if those outcomes were reached. In our current system, the CRS program managers do not target their coaching towards any specific area, but instead try to address all aspects of the CRS. This process results in scattered feedback over a plethora of areas. Having a targeted focus will guide thinking towards one or two specialized goals and will include times to check in to determine progress.
The coaching framework will include four intentional interactions between the CRS program manager and the DD. These touches might be either face to face or virtual, and the focus of these touches will be the DDs goals. Progress will be monitored by the CRS program manager to help determine if the actions being made are assisting the district in improving CRS implementation. The focused touches will reduce unnecessary travel and will boost the productivity of the time spent with the DD.

In our current practice, the CRS program manager might or might not have a specific plan for how a visit with the school district DD will run. Sometimes CRS program managers see as many as 6 schools in one day, spending less than an hour at each school, with no real analysis or coaching happening. The time in schools only hits the basic surface level of what is happening in that building. The school district DD might or might not accompany the CRS program manager on the visit, and no plan is set for continuous growth and improvement once the CRS program manager leaves the campuses.

If the coaching framework were being utilized, the CRS program managers would have a very specific roadmap for coaching. This would likely only involve visiting one or two schools, alongside the DD, and during the visit the CRS program manager would be coaching the DD. The coaching would focus on how to interact with the sites and coach the schools. The expectation would be that the DD would continue the coaching and training of the school level staff throughout the year, without the direct assistance of the CRS program manager. This model creates sustainability within the district, and allows for coaching and learning to continue even when the CRS’ program manager is unavailable.
If this coaching framework is implemented, districts would be better equipped to implement the CRS in alignment with other district level initiatives. The CRS’ program manager also would be able to customize coaching for the district to meet the goals of the district, allowing for more specialized growth. The students would ultimately have the opportunity to be exposed to college focused teaching and will have options upon graduation.

I started the Change Leadership Project at the same time the company started a pilot study of a coaching framework, designed by my team. This coaching framework had not existed prior to January 2016, and was only implemented by a small group of program managers for the first three months. I wrote about the need for the coaching framework as it was implemented in our organization, and then surveyed and interviewed those involved at the very beginning of the expectation that it would be used system wide.

My change is that every program staff member implement this new coaching framework in the fall of 2016. The lack of a consistent coaching framework has existed in our organization for the last 35 years, but is now being addressed by the organization as a whole through this change project.

While the pilot involved about 30 program staff members total, I interviewed two program managers and the two districts they worked with for the pilot. This framework now extends to all areas throughout the United States and internationally as our new expected way of work beginning in the fall of 2016. A committee of program staff members will continue refining this process to ensure that it meets the needs of our internal staff and our external clients. This will require completing the framework and
developing a change plan for implementing a large-scale use of the developed framework and a system of continuous improvement of it.

The coaching framework will require continuous staff education and training, as the process evolves. This training will need to occur in a variety of ways because of the remote nature of CRS employees. The training will also need to be differentiated based on the needs of the staff members involved.

Also, there must be an ongoing evaluation of the framework’s use and impact. The organization plans to make continuous adjustments to the framework, tools, and training to meet the needs of those using the framework and those being coached via the framework. The expectation is not that CRS staff will “arrive” and become experts at coaching, but instead that they will continue to hone their coaching skills through practice and training.

Rationale

In the fall of 2015, after identifying the need for an organization-wide approach to coaching districts, the CRS division liaisons designed a framework for coaching. This coaching framework could be a nationally scalable model of coaching. A group of four division liaisons in the CRS organization researched and interviewed CRS staff members and created a coaching framework that incorporated the best practices being used throughout the organization. I am one of the division liaisons, and together we felt this coaching framework could be used by all CRS staff with our external partners. This is my personal involvement with this change plan.

This intentional coaching framework specifically targets the coaching of the DD as the conduit for continued support in the district. This framework involves setting of
SMART goals. They must be specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and timely (Top Achievement, n.d.) with the DD. These goals must be revisited with a CRS employee at least 4 times a year. In these meetings, the DD and CRS program manager would check for progress and growth through formative assessment. The SMART goals would form the basis for measuring outcomes and assessing the degree of progress made towards specified goals set collaboratively by the DD and CRS program manager. In addition, by having the CRS program manager work directly with the DD, rather than with school site teachers and leaders, the coaching relationship should build the skill set of the DDs, who are employed by the school district. It also should allow them to provide ongoing leadership, thereby enhancing the quality of implementation of the CRS in the school district which promotes sustainability.

When I entered undergraduate school, after finishing high school ranked fourth in my class, I was rudely awakened to the fact that I did not possess any practical learning skills. I had not developed note taking, critical reading, time management, or thinking skills in high school. I had simply learned how to play the game. When I became a teacher, I promised myself that no student would ever leave my room as clueless as I had been about learning.

When I became a CRS school district director for my school district and had the chance to influence learning in 35 secondary schools, I worked diligently to make my passion for brighter futures contagious. As I transitioned from public education to the non-profit private sector, my passion shifted to an even larger audience. CRS trains over 39,000 educators every summer. I want all of those educators to go back to their
buildings and be supported consistently to teach and inspire their students to be lifelong learners.

My audience has changed over the years but my focus and passion has not. I want to equip our staff to handle their daily work so that they can be more effective teachers who can enhance students’ learning and future school and career opportunities. Excellence in teaching and learning can and should be contagious, but CRS program managers and school district DDs need to have the right tools to help make it happen.

When our organization’s leadership shifted, an assessment took place of our needs and gaps in the field. My current position as a CRS division liaison was created to help bridge the gap between our headquarters, where our operations, curriculum development, and professional learning originate, and the four divisional offices which work directly with our external partners (school districts). When the division liaison position was created, our first task was to tackle the six unity items that our internal staff determined were our most pressing areas of need. Of the six unity items identified, four of them involved the need for a coaching process that includes the identification of who to coach, when to do it, and how to coach our districts’ participating staff members identified for the training. This is the focus of my change plan.

We researched existing practices within the organization, as well as attended coaching trainings from various sources, to determine what components needed to exist in a coaching framework so that consistency and efficiency could become the norm. The research led us to a coaching framework which involves 4 coaching visits per year with the DD which focus on the goals of the school district director for the district and schools. The coaching visits can be conducted virtually or face to face and will
consistently focus on the goals set by the school district DD and the CRS program manager together, again based on the needs of the district.

If implemented well, CRS’s proposed coaching framework has the opportunity to positively impact the implementation of CRS in every CRS district across the nation. If the College Readiness System is not implemented well, the use of the research based strategies to improve student achievement will likely be inconsistent and isolated to the few teachers who choose to use it in their individual classrooms. I believe that all students should be taught by the best teachers and be given the chance to live up to their full potential. For this to be true, the educators need to not only have the skill sets to provide appropriate rigor for their students, but also the beliefs and mindset that all students can learn. By using a consistent coaching framework which would help the educators weave district initiatives with CRS’s research based strategies and college focused culture, CRS would be able to positively assist schools and districts in this journey towards excellence.

As was my intent, my study was a significant part of my change process. Taking the time to test the framework started as a bottom up thinking and doing process that should lead to the revised coaching framework and its implementation. My study and the implementation of the coaching framework have happened in tandem.

**How the Change Plan Will Improve the Organizations’ Educational Environment**

A consistent coaching framework provides a replicable model for supporting and coaching districts. This model can easily be utilized by DDs to assist schools as they refine their implementation of CRS such that the impact on teachers’ pedagogy and student achievement is maximized. By providing specific, measurable feedback to the
DD, the CRS program manager will be able to focus support on those needs identified as most pressing instead of trying to cover the entire CRSCollege Readiness System at once. The feedback might address such areas as how to improve teaching habits, potential upcoming training opportunities and ideas for growing leaders.

A study conducted in 2008 by Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, and Siegle found that in year 1 of the College Readiness System’s implementation significant changes in the students’ language arts and writing did not occur. However, even though significant changes in student performance were not evident in year 1 of implementation, when stakeholders (teachers and administrators) were interviewed they all highly supported the program and found it worthwhile. Further study after year 2 yielded evidence of positive changes in student performance. The inconsistency of growth for the students in year one as compared to year two suggested that “full implementation of the program and therefore its full impact on academic performance variables did not occur in the 1st year” (p.121). Certainly, part of this difference might be attributed to the fact that time is needed to implement any new initiative; yet, the ramping up of CRS implementation could be enhanced using this coaching framework. The design of the coaching framework would assist with maximizing the proper implementation of the CRS beginning year 1. In turn it would result in more consistent improvement for the students from the very beginning such that the student academic gains match the enthusiasm for CRS methodologies evident in the stakeholders’ interviews.

Implementation of the CRS includes employing high engagement, research based instructional practices in classrooms. When utilized throughout a district, students are exposed to more rigorous courses, which in turn prepares them to have options when they
graduate from high school. In an independent study conducted by Clark County School District in Nevada, CRS students (students who are enrolled in the CRS elective course) took an average of 6.72 AP and honors courses compared to their non-CRS classmates’ average of 3.69. In the district’s second year of implementation, the mean remained double that of the non-CRS students (Pitch, Marchand, Hoffman, & Lewis, 2006).

“CRS’s mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society” (www.CRS.org, 2016). CRS works with school districts to address the achievement gap of GPA, access to rigorous courses, and of college and career readiness for all students. In order for that mission to be realized, strong implementation needs to happen in every district across the nation, through the support of a strong CRS program manager as a coach. Employing a consistent coaching framework that frames interactions between CRS and districts around common goals set by the CRS program manager and the school district DD together, would give specific direction and purpose to the interactions between CRS staff and school districts. This intentionality would provide differentiation for districts and give specialized interventions to each district based on need.

In districts where CRS is implemented with fidelity, we see an increase in students who graduate from high school as college and career ready per national standards – CRS students 76% as compared to 72.2% nationally (Huerta & Watt, 2015). In Huerta and Watt’s independent study of the CRS, 329 CRS graduates from CRS certified schools had grade point averages and college credit accrual in high schools that were predictive of success in college. However, it should be pointed out that CRS’s purpose is not to improve student grades. It is to make them more college and career
ready upon graduation. This may or may not result in higher GPA’s, but should lead to sufficient students’ learning growth to continue their education beyond high school and assist with finding employment.

Thirty-seven years of research, both internal and external, shows us that if CRS is implemented with fidelity, students reap the benefits with futures that have a wide variety of options for success, be it college or career driven. Exposure to more difficult coursework prepares students for challenges both in and out of school. According to College Board, a student who takes an Advanced Placement (AP) course while in high school performs better in his or her first year of college than a student who did not (Mattern, Marini, & Shaw, 2013). If a student performs well in an AP course he or she is more likely to return for a second year of college (Mattern, Marini, & Shaw, 2013). We want students to be successful in their future endeavors, whatever they may be.

National Student Clearinghouse (source withheld for anonymity) data shows that CRS students of various ethnicities and socioeconomic status enroll in two and four year colleges at a rate that surpasses their non-CRS counterparts nationally. In the 2010-11 graduating class 67% of CRS students who were classified with a low socioeconomic status enrolled in colleges and universities the fall after they graduated from high school (47% in 4 year and 20% in 2 year schools) while only 57% of the graduates nationally who were classified with a low socioeconomic status enrolled (31% in 4 year and 26% in 2 year schools). The 2010-11 CRS cohort not only attended college, but 78% of the students who enrolled in college immediately following high school graduation persisted into their third year for a total of n=27,766 students. The 2011-12 cohort had 87% of those who entered persist through their second year of college. This persistence was
equally high regardless of ethnicity, gender or socioeconomic status. (n=32,987). The company leaders want this kind of success for as many students as possible, increasing the company’s need for change in how they support districts (source withheld for anonymity). From 2008-2013, the percentage of students from low income households who enrolled in college nationally dropped from 55.9% to 45.5%. This analysis is based on the US Census Bureau. The ACE study defined low-income as those from the bottom 20 percent of incomes in America (Jaschik, 2015).

Fairfax County Schools studied the impact of the College Readiness System in their high schools through a grant. In the follow up executive report completed in Fairfax County in 2013, researchers focused on college acceptance and enrollment of CRS students with matched non-CRS participants from the year one evaluation. When this report was completed the students were still in college, so completion rates were not available, persistence rates from year one to year two: “indicate a small but consistent advantage to students who had participated in CRS with respect to enrolling in four-year institutions during all three school years” (p.2), but enrollment rates were significantly higher in the CRS students than the non-CRS students (Fairfax, 2013).

Fairfax County tracked 187 of their students beyond high school for 4 years. During this longitudinal study, the tracked students graduated in 2008-19. In the 2009-10 school year, 77 percent of the CRS students (n=61 students) and 70 percent of the non-CRS sample (n=50 students) enrolled in college. In 2011-12, 77 percent of the CRS students (n=60 students) and 75 percent of the non-CRS comparable counterparts were still enrolled in college. This shows that more CRS students enrolled in and persisted in college than their non-CRS counterparts from their high school graduating class (p. 3).
The National Student Clearinghouse allows students to be tracked into and through college, regardless of where in the country they choose to attend school. According to the National Student Clearinghouse data for the past few years (2010-2013), CRS students have enrolled in college at a slightly higher rate (2-5%) than the national average, and all ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups have surpassed the non-CRS comparable demographic groups in persistence to year two and year three (source withheld for anonymity).

In Figure 1, the graduating class of CRS seniors nationally in 2010 (n=22,060) with 69% of CRS females and 67% of CRS males enrolled in either a two- or four-year college. The national average was 73% of females and 63% of males enrolled. CRS’s target audience are students in the middle academically who are likely to be first generation college students. This can include students of different ethnicities and students of low socioeconomic status, as they are often underrepresented in college. In the graduating class of 2010, 67% of the seniors were of low socioeconomic status, as compared to the national average of 38%. When broken down by socioeconomic status in Figure 2, 66% of the low socioeconomic CRS students enrolled in two- or four- year colleges, and the national average was only 54%. In Table 3, when categorized by ethnicity, CRS’s enrollment was higher than the national average in the categories of Black or African American (72% CRS, 59% non-CRS), Hispanic or Latino (65% CRS, 60% non-CRS), White, not Hispanic (71% CRS, 70% non-CRS) and slightly lower in the category of Other (72% CRS, 83% non-CRS) (source withheld for anonymity). Overall, 68% of CSR graduates in 2010 enrolled in either a two- or four-year institution of higher education.
Figure 1. Enrollment rates first fall after graduation by gender.

Figure 2. Enrollment rates first fall after graduation by socio-economic status.
Figure 3. Enrollment rates first fall after graduation by ethnicity.

**Goals of the Project**

The goals of my change plan include: creating a coaching framework, including a toolkit and protocols, that will be consistently used across the country, and training our CRS staff, specifically our CRS program managers, in a coaching framework that provides a structure for who gets coached and how. It is my hope that as many students as possible have the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education and are equipped to successfully navigate the course. It is not enough to just hear about best practices you must implement them at the school level. CRS coaching helps districts help schools implement the practices they learned at summer institute. Implementation of a CRS coaching framework which includes the use of a consistent set of protocols and resources, will help districts and school sites accomplish this.
I will explore the implementation of the coaching framework, including the creation and utilization of the toolkit and protocols, and study its impact on the perception of the services we provide to our CRS partner districts and the benefits of our coaching framework to school district DDs.

The problem I wish to address involves undefined expectations for the creation and use of the National CRS coaching cycle. These undefined expectations result in a lack of fidelity when districts implement the College Readiness System (CRS). The coaching we provide to districts lacks a framework and consistent components, resulting in some districts having a very strong implementation of the CRS and others not achieving the desired results on the CRS Certification Self Study, our fidelity measurement tool.

I assert that the creation of a consistent coaching framework that could be used by all CRS program managers would improve the specificity of the support given to our schools through differentiation of services. The framework would provide the basis for our contact with districts (number of touches with the school district DD and the focus of the visits), while allowing for unique district needs to be met. A consistent coaching framework that will specifically involve setting goals for the districts, will allow us to measure whether or not the districts are making strides towards their goals. The goals must be revisited 4 times a year by the CRS program manager and the DD. Behaviors and actions can be altered during the school year to improve overall implementation and movement towards meeting the goals set.

Having a toolkit of consistent resources will ensure that the CRS program managers all have the tools necessary to successful coach their districts, instead of having
to search a large database to find a tool that might or might not work for the situation. Currently, we have a plethora of resources, both current and outdated, being utilized throughout the organization. The toolkit will become the one place that CRS program managers go to find what they need to work with their districts.

A commonly followed set of protocols will allow the CRS program manager to confidently handle a variety of situations with their assigned DD. The protocols will act as a script for the CRS program manager to follow based on the needs of the district and the circumstance being faced. The division liaisons and external parties from the Art of Coaching system will train the CRS program managers multiple times throughout the school year, and the training will not stop at the end of the year. The training will be differentiated and will build upon previous trainings, allowing for CRS program managers to become experts in the protocols they need most frequently, based on their job descriptions and clientele. CRS program managers will have a more concrete idea of who to coach and how to coach them when they visit districts.

It will be the job of the division liaisons along with the professional learning team to build all future trainings and interactions for the next year to create a consistent coaching framework organization wide. We have been working with a pilot group to test out theories and measure their effectiveness since January 2016. We will use the suggestions from the pilot to tweak the final product prior to its roll out in September 2016.

**Current Coaching Practices**

Our CRS program managers do not currently have a set number of visits, or a set agenda for working with districts. Instead, the CRS program manager visits schools
within the district without a specific purpose or direction for the visit. Some CRS program managers set specific goals with their school district DDs but many provide the same services to all the districts they manage, regardless of the needs of the district.

The current system, or lack there-of, does not allow for specific monitoring of progress or growth achievement. Without targets, determining success can be more difficult, and districts and school district DDs can become frustrated with their CRS implementation. Without specific protocols for serving districts and well-established goals, the company’s leaders have no consistent way to pinpoint the source of the frustration and target coaching to improve implementation.

**Proposed Coaching Framework**

In order to address my As-Is components (see Appendix A) to reach the To-Be state, I envision (see Appendix B) the CRS needs an updated coaching framework. It would require the DD to complete a questionnaire based off of the roles and responsibilities of a District director. The DD would rank himself in each category listed on the roles and responsibilities document. Based on the rankings and conversation the CRS program manager and the school district DD would create SMART goals around the specific areas of need for that DD. The goals would be monitored throughout the school year through a series of intentional conversations between the CRS program manager and the school district DD. There would be 4 interactions, some face to face and some virtual, depending on the needs of the DD. These interactions will range in specificity depending on the goals. Because the goals are measurable, the CRS program manager and the DD will be able to discuss the progress towards the goals throughout the year and at year’s end.
The questionnaire and proposed updated coaching framework have been piloted by a cohort of CRS program managers for 5 months (February through May, 2016) and minor adjustments have been made based on suggestions from those in the pilot. The entire CRS program manager team of 50 used this standardized system beginning in the fall of the 2016-17 school year.

**Setting**

CRS is a non-profit organization serving over 1,000,000 students in 44 states and 16 countries. It serves 5,600 K-12 schools and 40 high education institutions. Of its students, 64% are considered low income, and demographically follows this breakdown; 51% Hispanic, 21% White, 17% Black, 5% Asian, 3% multi-racial, and 3% other (source removed for anonymity).

CRS serves rural districts, suburban districts, urban districts, and the Department of Defense schools in 16 other countries. I studied the impact of CRS coaching in two districts where the coaching pilot was utilized in spring of 2016 to see how the district level personnel’s understanding of how to support their sites shifted. I compared that impact to the CRS coaching impact in two districts where the coach did not follow the new proposed framework.

I have selected the districts so that I could examine results for similar, comparable districts. The first district, Kings Union District (pseudonym), has one high school implementing the College Readiness System. The district serves 16,191 students, of which 44.4% are Hispanic, 48.1% are Caucasian, 0.3% are African American, 1.9% are American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.2% are Asian, 0.3% are Native Hawaiian, 0.3% are some other race alone, and 2.6 are two or more races (proximatyone.com). This
district did participate in the coaching pilot and was coached by a CRS program manager who has worked for CRS for one year.

The second district did not participate in the coaching pilot. Quarters School District (pseudonym) has one high school and one middle school implementing CRS. The district serves 11,321 students, of which 48.0% are Hispanic, 41.1% are Caucasian, 0.1% are African-American, 0.4% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.1% are Asian, 0.2% are Native Hawaiian and 0.2% are two or more races (ProximityOne, n.d.). This district was coached by a CRS program manager who has worked for CRS for one year.

The third district is Lester School District (pseudonym) and has 11 CRS schools. The district serves a total of 28,921 students, of which 23.5% are Anglo/Other, 58.7% are Hispanic, 13.7% are African-American, and 64.5% are economically disadvantaged (source non-disclosed to protect anonymity). This district did participate in the coaching pilot and was coached by a CRS program manager who has worked for CRS for eight years.

The fourth school district is Newtown School District (pseudonym), and has 10 CRS schools. The district serves approximately 82,000 students, of which 32% are Caucasian, 45% are African-American, 19% are Hispanic, 4% are Asian, and 0.26% are Other (source non-disclosed to protect anonymity). This district did not participate in the pilot and was coached by a CRS program manager who has worked for CRS for eight years.

I selected one district per division. To protect identities, we will call them Division A, B, C, and D. Two of the districts did experience the coaching framework in
the spring of 2016 and two did not. The DDs vary in experience level and roles, and the CRS program managers also vary in previous experience and years with CRS. The variety helped me determine the experiences had by new and existing employees and external partners, which in turn helped me tweak the coaching framework to better meet the needs of various skill levels.

**Exploratory Questions**

For this change plan, I utilized interviews and surveys to answer a few primary questions. I did this to help address CRS’s mission of closing the “achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society” (source withheld for anonymity). I did the same for my secondary questions.

**Primary Exploratory Questions**

To address CRS’s mission, I envision a change in the current coaching framework. To do this I need to find some answers to some primary exploratory research questions relative to a recently conducted pilot program. I wanted to determine the implications of having a consistent coaching framework used by the entire organization. My primary exploratory questions were as follows:

How effective is the implementation of the coaching framework in supporting CRS program managers to better diagnose the needs of school district DDs and school districts?

How effective is the implementation of the coaching framework in supporting school district DDs to support and coach CRS sites within a district, through the setting of specific SMART goals?
How might a consistent coaching framework that meets the specific needs of a school district assist the district in maximizing its College Readiness System implementation?

**Secondary Exploratory Questions**

In addition to my primary questions, I would also like to determine the answers to some secondary exploratory questions. These questions will better help me determine the needs of our internal staff members as they implement this new coaching framework.

What resources, skill sets, and training does CRS staff need to implement successfully implement a new coaching framework?

What perceptions do the CRS program managers have about the new coaching framework?

I will use the answers to these questions to guide my future work in the implementation of this framework. I will be informed on next steps and needed training through the answers as well.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I hope to lead an organizational change that will increase our consistency while maintaining uniqueness in addressing individual district and school service needs of our external partners so that more students will graduate from high school and are college and career ready. I equate having consistency in our coaching as an organization to having a well-tuned bicycle for a long journey. My brother used to own a bike shop. Nothing made him angrier than to go to a store where the primary purpose was not to sell bikes. The bikes were often put together by people who knew nothing about bikes and poor tools, therefore handlebars were put on backwards, brake
lines were twisted, and seats were unstable. All the tools for a successful bike repair were there, but because the employee lacked the skills and needed tools the bikes were not well assembled and the rider could not ride it.

Through a variety of trainings, the company leaders have provided the tools for effective interactions with districts to our staff in pieces and asked them to put them together themselves with limited training to use the tools needed for working with school districts. This led to poorly built and less successful programs than they could have been. We want to develop better tools and train them together while letting them use their individual discretion to meet the individual needs of each district they serve. This has the potential to improve schools both in the United States and around the world and send more students into a future with more options.
SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 C’S (AS IS)

I have outlined my thinking around, culture, context, conditions, and competencies through my As Is graphic (Appendix A) and in doing so have discovered a few things about my personal biases. I realized that just because I believe that a better coaching framework could make jobs easier, I must value the opinions of my colleagues. Perceived need for change and actual need for change both factor into the ability to make the change. In order to institute this change to a consistent coaching process, all stakeholders must agree that there is a need for change and a common understanding of why the change is needed. Additionally, there must be a shared sense of urgency with both our internal staff and our external partners, and this urgency must be supported by our guiding coalition (Kotter, 1996).

I have some assumptions about the reasons why people resist change, but I need to assess the reasons of individuals, rather than moving forward based on what I assume. Without determining the root cause of the issues surrounding resistance to implementing a consistent coaching framework, I could unintentionally treat only the symptoms and not the real issue or assume that all staff members who resist, do so for the same reason. I want to know why some people are resistant to trying a new coaching framework and then learn how to help them accept change. All CRS’ program managers that I surveyed went through the initial training on the CRS coaching framework, but only about half tried any portion of it with school district DDs. Only those who participated in the coaching pilot in the spring of 2016 will have used this process with districts prior to the survey.
Context

The context of my change plan addresses the “skill demands” and “particular aspirations” of CRS in specific regards to having a coaching framework to use with our external partners (Wagner et al., 2006, p.104). Contextual information helps mold and shape my work on the need for a coaching framework. There are two major pieces of context that I hope to address in my change plan; lack of guidelines for interactions with external partners and lack of consistency for what happens when interactions take place.

In the last 37 years, CRS has grown from one classroom with one teacher working with 30 students to thousands of classrooms serving 1.2 million students. Maintaining consistency in one classroom does not require the systems that we must implement today with our current numbers. A variety of influences impact the variability of implementation, most of which occur at the school level.

The external support we provide, however, can be significantly influenced at the corporate level. Right now, the support we offer districts varies greatly from division to division, state to state, and region to region. Our staff has not been trained on a consistent framework for serving districts. The variability in service has added to variability in implementation than would have existed based solely on the personalities of the schools themselves. We need to concentrate on our sphere of influence and provide a consistent form of coaching to our districts. We cannot control what the districts choose to do with the knowledge they have gained through CRS training, but we can guide their direction through goal setting so that they are able to maximize and focus their implementation.
Our schools utilize a Certification Self Study annually as a check and balance system for their CRS implementation. The information in the study is self-reported then double checked by a CRS trained school district DD. The tools for meeting certification are provided at CRS Summer Institute, but are reinforced by the CRS coach (CRS program manager) who works with the schools throughout the school year. My goal is to provide a consistent coaching framework. This is needed so the interactions that our CRS program managers have with our school district DDs contains specific common elements. They also must make sure all interactions are built around goals set for the DD to complete with their schools to improve their levels of certification and therefore implementation. The goals will be set by the DD and the program manager together.

Another component of the consistent coaching framework is to insure the interactions of our CRS program managers have with our school district contain specific common elements and all interactions are built around goals. The goals will be set by the DD and the program manager together based largely around the needs of the schools as indicated in their Certification Self Study. Having a targeted focus will allow for more intentional support and coaching and more tangible results.

**Culture**

The “shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors” that our internal staff has in regards to serving sites currently focuses on the program staff’s previous expertise and complete autonomy (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 102). The culture at CRS honors the expertise of the individuals we hire, and that value is well placed. The staff we employ, however, comes from a variety of backgrounds and each person arrives with a different skill set. We need to provide a framework for coaching so that the skills
each employee brings can fit within the framework. Currently each CRS program manager must design his own framework and add in unique nuances of coaching. More consistency of practice is needed as the program staff move to provide support to the district’s DD.

Autonomy reigns over consistency and unity in CRS staff’s partner interactions. CRS staff feels threatened and vulnerable regarding the expectations set for them around coaching. CRS staff is aware that there is no accountability built into the current coaching model and they are resistant to change. In this organization, as in any, change can feel threatening and requires staff to be vulnerable, admitting areas of need. CRS’s staff has had autonomy, and people have figured out their own systems for serving sites and districts. The systems do, in many cases, work, but they often require additional effort, time, energy, and travel. A streamlined system for coaching districts will provide support for the program staff to be able to be more efficient in delivering their service, but it will require them to give up parts of the way they currently operate.

In *The Six Secrets of Change*, Fullan talks about six conditions that need to be in place for change to be successful. Secret three states that “capacity building prevails” (2008, p.13) meaning that we need to invest in the training of our staff consistently for change to be accepted. Until now, CRS has focused its attention on training external partners rather than internal staff. Since training has not been a focal point, people have created their own ways of work and some people are now resistant to changing their ways of work. We need to help staff members understand that the changes that we are asking them to employ will be supported through ongoing training and ultimately assist them in serving partners more effectively and efficiently.
Internal CRS Staff assumes there is not specific accountability for their specific practices with partners; therefore, they see no need for change. We need to create a sense of urgency with our staff that change in our current practices will bring about better results for our external partners and a smoother way of work for our internal staff. We want to provide a coaching framework that will assist our staff by reducing travel, increasing productivity, and creating more focused efficiency.

**Conditions**

The condition of our organization that has the biggest impact on our work is the time, location and proximity of our internal staff. In the Eastern Division, we have 26 staff members and only 5 of them work in the same office, while the other 21 work out of 21 home offices. All 21 of those who work from home offices are the program staff who are working directly with external partners. Although we have WebEx, which is a teleconference system, and Cisco phones with video capabilities, virtual communication is simply not the same as being in the same physical space together every day. To further complicate things, we serve school districts from Maine to the Virgin Islands with several staff members responsible for up to 12 states. Those 12 states can include as many as 45 districts and 150 schools. We only get to be in the same place at the same time as a staff about 4 times a year, and the agenda for those meetings get packed full of a multitude of things.

There are three main conditions associated with the coaching framework. First, some offices cause limited face to face CRS staff interaction. Second, extensive geographical service areas add to communication problems. Finally, many initiatives and priorities exist to address them in the time available for training.
Isolation can happen when employees work in the same building, but it is almost inevitable when everyone works in different states. Professional learning has to be intentional and creative to create a learning environment that transcends the miles. We have to make the most of our limited time together, and the virtual time we can create, to be able to all know and understand the same coaching framework.

Serving 3361 secondary schools in 44 states and 16 countries requires us to meet very different needs for our external partners. No two schools or districts have the same needs and yet our task is to do our best to meet them all. This condition will never change, but learning how to categorize the needs of schools and put them into a coaching framework would lessen the load for our internal staff by creating specific structure around expectations and provide tools for meeting those expectations. Right now, we are all approaching every need as if it were completely unique and we do not rely on each other to help fill the need. Program staff spends time creating similar documents to accomplish various portions of their work instead of focusing on the work itself. A unified coaching framework, complete with already created tools and forms would allow us to learn best practices from one another, and spend more time working with external partners and less time creating tools for that work.

Time spent face to face for professional development within the organization is limited and often full of a number of initiatives and priorities. Our scale and structure requires us to work out of home offices all over the country. We come together as an entire staff once a year and as program staff two additional times each year. The time we spend together gets divided between all the initiatives we have as an organization, and those initiatives seem to operate in isolation.
A high level of financial investment must be allocated to bring our staff together face to face. In order for increased collaboration around coaching to become a reality, the change agents must justify the need to bring people together and get those experiences written into the budget. Since the budget for the entire year has already been set, we must work within the confines of our existing planned professional learning time to meet the needs of the program staff in terms of coaching. Some creativity will be required to help people learn from one another without being all together.

**Competencies**

Competencies can be defined as knowledge and skills that influence learning (Wagner et al., 2006). When thinking about competencies, CRS knows how to provide professional learning for our external partners. CRS is a professional learning organization, with a very heavy focus on what we teach our external partners. We train educators in a variety of settings to become better at their craft through modeling and specific research based strategies.

However, we have not previously trained our internal staff in specific ways to help the external partners, causing a large variety of approaches to support and coaching. Personalities and previous job experiences bring an appropriate level of uniqueness to our coaching of districts, and generally work well for meeting partner’s needs. However, without a framework to work within, the program staff have a difficult time knowing exactly how to navigate the coaching and support.

Coaching methods vary widely among internal staff based on the coach’s prior job experiences. A variety of educators have an active role in the implementation of CRS. Teachers implement CRS strategies and practices in classrooms that are based on a
philosophy of belief that all students can learn and must be given the opportunity to do so. This same philosophy drives guidance counselors to bring CRS practices of setting students up for success and scheduling them in rigorous courses. Principals use CRS practices to run their schools and CRS strategies to train their staff, and school district directors creatively to weave CRS into the district’s strategic plans. Our staff’s experience in the educational sector prior to being hired by CRS runs the gamut from classroom teachers to superintendents. Typically, our internal staff gravitates toward the position they most recently held. Former teachers focus on the classroom level of implementation. Former principals tend to direct principals in how to run their schools. Former superintendents go straight to the superintendents to discuss how CRS can have a district wide impact. We need a framework that guides our staff in interactions at various levels, and also helps the staff know when to bring in reinforcements.

We have a wonderful variety of talent in our organization, and we need to capitalize on this expertise to mentor and support one another. If a coach needs to have a tough conversation with a superintendent, they need to both have some ideas for how to manage that conversation through training, and the ability to bring in a supervisor to assist with the conversation. Our protocol now does not encourage using expertise where it is needed. By implementing a coaching framework that includes a protocol for sharing expertise depending on the situations, our support to partners would be even stronger.

Having coaches with a variety of backgrounds and expertise who use varied approaches to coaching is not a bad thing, but they all tend to produce different results. If the classroom teacher does an excellent job but the rest of the school does not know how to implement CRS, it will always be a classroom based initiative. If the superintendent
understands the big picture of CRS’s importance it might grow, but the teachers and principals might not implement the CRS with fidelity. This happens because they are unsure how to make it work, causing inconsistent results. CRS’s coaching framework must transcend job titles and prior knowledge, and ask the right questions regardless of title. When the right questions and guidance are not enough to impact the individual needs of the stakeholders, the permission to bring in other CRS employees with different titles and expertise to help have the conversation needs to exist and be exercised.

The CRS program managers do not use the same language or enter with the same level of expertise when they enter the organization. The managers do not currently all speak a common language in terms of coaching, making it difficult to communicate about coaching effectively. They need to create consistent terminology and utilize it at all levels of the organization. We can intentionally fill gaps and use the knowledge of those in the organization to train others.

As it stands now, coaching collaboration does not take place with any regularity. Instead of being a priority to all stakeholders, other initiatives and ideas tend to take precedence over coaching. The professional learning team needs to continue to create opportunities for its program staff to learn from one another and share their experiences so that the common issues can be solved with a synergistic, organization wide approach. This process started in this first year of implementation.

Some of the internal staff lack the hard skills needed to successfully coach, i.e. coaching stems, which are sentence starters that help build prompt productive conversation through asking pointed questions, identifying learning gaps, and conducting logistics planning. Other staff members need more of the soft skills, i.e. knowing when
to visit a district face to face versus virtually, or who to approach within the district to help make CRS a way of work. Both these needs must be addressed in our coaching framework to meet the needs of all our staff. We will also need to offer differentiated opportunities for growth so that supervisors and employees can work as a team to identify and fill gaps in understanding how to coach and skill sets associated with coaching.

**Strategies and Action Chart**

My Strategies and Action Chart (Appendix J) further emphasizes my plan for addressing context, competencies, culture and conditions that exist and are in need of change. As mentioned throughout this section, I surveyed internal staff to help determine their needs as the company shifts to a new coaching framework and interview internal staff and school district DDs to see how the use of a coaching framework was perceived as compared to not using a specific type of coaching. In addition to those strategies, I focused on the continued refinement of a coaching framework to be used by all program staff. Training for the coaching framework is ongoing, both face to face and virtually, to allow staff members to build their skills in this new process. I worked with our leadership team to ensure that a sense of urgency has been created around the need for a consistent coaching framework. I also identified what funds might need to be reallocated to provide the proper training for our staff, and how staff will be held accountable for using the new framework.

**Conclusion**

CRS’s mission is “to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society” (source withheld for anonymity). We do this through professional learning opportunities for adults and continuous support for
districts and schools. Our current model, although effective is inconsistent. We need to create a consistent opportunity for our districts to receive the support they need to implement the College Readiness System with fidelity. Our coaching framework needs to contain consistent elements throughout the nation so that “all students” can truly mean all students in our CRS schools.
SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study focused on change leadership, specifically altering people’s actions to meet the needs of districts. For CRS, this is an adaptive challenge because we are asking staff to change priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 19) about coaching and supporting districts. In order to know if this type of change is necessary, urgent, and worthy of staff members’ time, I talked to the people who are most directly impacted by the shift.

Research Design

In this study, I collected survey data and interview data from our internal staff and selected school district DDs. We had survey data from a year ago, stating that our internal staff wanted a consistent coaching model to be used with our external partners, but my research helped determine if the coaching framework is actually being utilized and appreciated by our internal staff and external partners. I surveyed staff to see how their perceptions of the coaching framework change after implementing the plan for one semester.

Select CRS program managers used the coaching framework as a pilot beginning in January of 2016. In the spring of 2016, the division liaisons took the input from the coaching framework pilot and made tweaks to the system then trained the entire staff in the use of the framework in April of 2016. The interviews and surveys were conducted in August of 2016 with two audiences. One audience had participated in the pilot and had been through the April training. The other audience had been through the April training but had not yet utilized the framework. I conducted a second survey in December of 2016 to determine if the coaching framework was indeed being utilized by
program staff members and they perceived it to be useful or not. My study has coincided with the implementation of this change policy and the work that I have done has influenced the direction of the training for the framework.

The data I collected through surveys and interviews helped me get a better understanding of the perceptions of the parties being asked to change. These data have informed our next steps as an organization as we strive to impact 2 million students by 2020. I have shared the findings with the company’s executive leaders to determine our next steps as we continue the implementation process of this change.

I looked specifically at four districts, two coached using the pilot coaching framework and two that have not been coached using any specific framework. The districts vary in years of implementation, size, and experience level of the District director (DD). I interviewed the school district directors in both of those districts about their experiences when they interact with the CRS program manager. I obtained permission from the school district DDs and from the CRS program manager to interview them. I also asked permission of the supervisors of the CRS program managers.

Problems are not often neatly packaged and simple, as completely technical or adaptive, meaning that solutions need to come from both internal knowledge and new ways of work (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). The balance of using what we know works well and willingness to try new things could have a positive impact on the students in the district. I surveyed our CRS program managers about the existing ways they interact with districts and the new coaching framework that will roll out in the fall. This required permission from CRS.
Survey Data

The survey data allowed for all CRS program support staff, which included 11 state directors and 44 program managers to express comfort levels and desired outcomes of a new coaching framework. There are four people who hold the job title of “other” due to unique tasks tied to their positions for a total of 59 people. There were a total of 59 people included in this group, and two of those people were no longer working for CRS when the survey was given in December, reducing the number of people to 57. I designed a survey that allowed for scaled responses as well as open ended responses which will gives, both some quantitative and qualitative data for my study. The pre-survey, given in August, prior to program managers using the coaching framework, informed the next steps of the organization moving forward to allow them to meet the needs of staff members without simply guessing as to what they need. I crafted the questions on the survey to hit on context, conditions, culture, and competency concerns and perceptions. This information helped address my As Is and To Be statements.

The survey helped the division liaisons and CRS leaders to assess the perceived urgency of the need for a coaching framework, or shift the focus of the division liaisons once I gather and share the results with the organization. The results helped the leadership see where we are collectively as a staff. The staff already expressed the need for a consistent coaching framework a year ago, but it has been helpful to remind them why they wanted this change or if the change should take place in a different area. The survey data helped me put the need for a consistent coaching framework back in the forefront of their minds.
Interviews

The interviews helped me make comparisons between the perceptions of our CRS program managers and those of their school district DDs. We need to better serve our external partners. Also, I think the information from the interviews should assist us in how we work with them moving forward. The interviews showed a variety of expertise, expectations, and understandings. By speaking with external partners, I also learned the needs they have and will be able to assure those needs are met as well.

I interviewed two district directors who were not exposed to the coaching framework in the spring of 2016 and two who were exposed to it. I also interviewed the CRS program manager who works with these district directors. All of our program managers have been exposed to the framework in some way, but only two of the selected four program managers participated in the pilot that took place from January to May of 2016. The pilot participants had a more concentrated training on how to use the framework. The rest of the program managers were not trained until April.

Participants

In my study, I surveyed the CRS program support staff, which includes program managers, state directors, and a few people who I identified as “other.” I did this because of their unique job titles in the organization. I surveyed all of them once in August and again in December to determine their perceptions of the coaching framework, its usefulness, and their needs as they implement the framework with school districts. Giving the survey once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end allowed me to see how perceptions have changed after implementing the coaching framework with the school districts.
I also interviewed internal CRS program managers, specifically program staff who work with our external partners. I interviewed two CRS program managers who have been involved in the coaching pilot and two CRS program managers who have not been a part of the pilot. All four of these people hold the specific title of Program Manager in our organization. The candidates I chose to interview represent new and veteran staff members, and come from a variety of backgrounds. I have representation from each of the four divisions from the pilot group and the non-pilot group. The four divisions are identified as Division A, B, C, and D for the purposes of my paper. I worked with the other division liaisons to select a strong variety of people to interview so that I could get multiple perspectives for the study. I have selected 3 women and one man for my interviews of program staff.

The program manager from Division A has worked with CRS for less than year and was a part of the coaching pilot in the spring of 2016. Prior to working for CRS, he served as a high school vice principal and a high school math teacher. This person served 36 districts last year and will serve 27 in 2016-17.

The program manager from Division B has worked for CRS for 1 year and was not part of the coaching pilot. Prior to working for CRS, this program manager was a CRS Elective teacher and math teacher at a high school. He serves 34 districts in two states.

The program manager from Division C has worked for CRS for 8 years and was part of the coaching pilot. Prior to working for CRS this person taught math, social studies, reading, and the CRS Elective course to 6-8th graders. She also had a nine-year career in advertising.
The program manager for the Division D has worked for CRS for 8 years and was not part of the coaching pilot. Prior to working for CRS this person taught math and served as a department chair at the high school level. This person was also a CRS Elective Teacher and coordinator prior to working for CRS and currently serves twelve districts in four states.

In addition to CRS program managers, I interviewed four school district DDs who work with the CRS program managers that I interviewed. These interviews allowed me to determine the external partner perspective of the support and coaching CRS previously gave to external partners and what we will give with the new coaching framework. Two of the school district DDs experienced the coaching framework with their CRS’ program manager in the spring of 2016 and two of them did not see the coaching framework until after I interviewed them. By interviewing the school district DDs who work specifically with the CRS program manager I interviewed, I was able to make correlations between the internal and external perspective on the need for change.

The school district DD from California has been a DD since 2013, but held the role of CRS coordinator for over 5 years before that. District A did not have designated DDs until 2013. The DD from the District B has been a DD since 2013. The school district DD from District C has been a DD since 2012. The DD from District D has been a DD since 2014.

**Data Collection Techniques**

**Surveys**

I sent out surveys to the CRS program managers to gain their perceptions on the need for a new coaching framework and their current practices (for a copy of the pre and
post survey please see Appendix B and C). The survey included roughly 15-20 people from each of the four divisions, and a few people who work at CRS Headquarters for a total of 59 people. The survey was anonymous so that the participants can be candid. I did however, ask each person to identify their division so that we could use the survey information to determine what sorts of issues we need to address in each division. This helped guide our divisional work time and head off issues and concerns systematically. The survey was sent using Smartsheet, an electronic project planning system, and the data was compiled using Microsoft Excel via export.

**Interviews**

I conducted the interviews with a total of eight people, four CRS program managers and 4 school district DDs. I conducted the interviews one on one, via WebEx, a virtual conference option, due to the distant proximity of the participants. Each interview took 30-45 minutes and consisted of questions about the need for and use of a coaching framework (for a copy of the interviews please see Appendix E and F). I recorded the interviews so that I could revisit them and cross reference ideas and themes that flowed throughout the interviews. I requested the opportunity to get back in touch with the interviewees via email or phone in case I need further clarification no more than 5 times after the initial interview. I did not have to reach back out to the interviewees. The CRS program managers I interviewed support and coach the four DDs.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

**Surveys**

After conducting the survey (Appendix C) with the CRS program managers (59 people), I exported them to Excel and sorted them according to the scales that I used for
the first types of questions. I conducted the survey once in late summer, prior to the beginning of the school year when everyone would be expected to use the new coaching framework, and again in December, after the staff had used the new system for one semester. I sorted the surveys to put all the open-ended questions together and looked for themes in the responses. I used descriptive statistics to report out the survey results. Those themes are reported in my findings and guided our next steps as we implement this change project. The survey information helped inform future trainings and discussions within divisions.

**Interviews**

I collected the interview data and transcribed all the responses, looking for themes in each of the questions. The program managers and DDs from Divisions B and D were not a part of the pilot and the program managers and DDs from the Divisions A and C were a part of the pilot. I looked to see if the new CRS program managers and the CRS program manager had different perceptions of the purpose of the coaching framework and its usefulness. (For a copy of the interview questions see Appendix E.)

I interviewed each DD individually, using WebEx, a virtual meeting platform. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes. I selected two DDs who had not been a part of the pilot group and two DDs who had experience the coaching framework through the pilot in the spring of 2016. I used pseudonyms for the DDs I interviewed to protect their anonymity.
Ethical Considerations

Surveys

The surveys were anonymous, allowing for people to be able to candidly speak about their experiences, concerns, and next steps. I crafted the questions so that would not be easily identifiable through their answers, even though we know our staff well and there are only up to 20 staff members in each division. I sent out a consent email ahead of time to be sure that the people who chose to participate understood the purpose of the study and how the results would be used.

I conducted the survey using an electronic platform called Smartsheet. The electronic platform allows the participants to give anonymous answers. I had sole access to the responses of the survey and analyzed them by utilizing Excel. I gave the survey at the beginning of the school year (August) and at the end of the first semester (December), after the CRS program managers had all used the coaching framework for a semester.

Interviews

I asked each person interviewed to sign a consent form outlining the purpose of the interview and the ways in which it will be used (Appendix G, H, and I). I made sure that the participants understand that I would use pseudonyms for their names, their divisions, and their districts. I also avoided any distinguishing descriptions of their districts keeping terms to large urban, or small rural, and not give any specific numbers.

I asked the school district DDs to explain the types of service they received from their CRS staff person, but I did not utilize this information for any type of evaluation of the staff member and I did not share the information with any supervisor. The
The information given in the interviews was only used to better inform the tweaking and improvement of the coaching framework, not to evaluate the employee or the district. I carefully worked to maximize the benefit of the interviews by using the information learned to better shape our coaching framework and more effectively serve our external partners. I also minimized the harm to the internal and external partners by keeping them anonymous and allowing them to speak freely without judgement or evaluation. I preserved the relationships between the school district DDs and the program staff because they would need to continue working together. I carefully choose my words to allow for learning and growth without judgement.

Conclusion

Most of the data for my study is qualitative due to the anecdotal nature of this work. I have quantitative data from the survey questions that involved a range of responses, rather than open ended ones. I grouped the qualitative data into themes. Their responses provided insight into the next steps that need to be taken by our organization to continue positive coaching interactions with our districts. The data are analyzed in section five.
SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

Coaching educators has gained popularity in recent years and brings with it the idea of life-long learning. In *Leading Adult Learning*, Eleanor Drago-Severson (2009) describes adult learners as knowers. She says that adults typically fall into one of four categories of knowers; instrumental knowers, “the rule bound self,” (p. 43), socializing knowers, “other-focused self,” (p. 45), self-authoring knowers, “reflective self,” (p. 47) and self-transforming knowers, “the interconnecting self” (p. 48). In order to effectively coach educators towards improving their practice, identifying the knowing the style of the person can successfully guide his thinking towards transformation. In working with school district DDs, our program managers identify the needs of the DD and giving specific coaching and feedback to them based on those needs.

Coaching, whether in education or in corporate America is a means of personal transformation during personal or professional crisis” (Klarin, 2015). Executives, from multiple industries around the world who were interviewed by Klarin believe that there is benefit to being coached. They were quoted in his article as saying “it gives the real performance of a person, rather than their own impression,” quote from a New Zealander executive, or “leadership development improved behavior and yielded better results”, a quote from a Brazilian executive. In Russia, they believe that it allows “full growth of a leader’s potential,” and according to an executive in the United Kingdom, it helps people “become more resourceful and creative” (p. 416). Coaching helps people look outward for answers instead of relying solely on their own capabilities and knowledge.
Jim Knight, an educational coach and author, says that coaching must be accountable. If we do not hold district directors accountable for implementing their goals, the chances of the goals being implemented drop dramatically. He also says that “coaches often know a lot about teaching, but if they do not understand the complexities of working with adults, they might prompt others to resist what they are offering” (Knight, 2016, p. 27-28). For coaching to work out positively, we must carefully build relationships with those we wish to coach.

Coaching aims to help individuals and organizations to become more effective, by reaching positive and significant results, through making intentional changes in behavior, thought, or emotion (Correia, dos Santos, & Passmore, 2016). CRS needs to support change in the behaviors of external partners by helping them focus their attention on specific goals. This focused approach will provide the opportunity for districts to set goals and meet them as a team.

**Transformational Coaching**

Transformational coaching is a partnership, contingent on deep trust and understanding, requiring two willing parties and a strong relationship (Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto, 2011). Asking district directors to move through the process of transformational coaching will require a strong relationship, built on trust and understanding, and nurtured through mutual respect. The process of setting goals and discussing the progress towards meeting those goals will guide the implementation of the College Readiness System in districts throughout the country, and the coaching piece will help push them to new heights.
In Oakland, California, through a district initiative, every principal was assigned a coach. At first many of the principals spoke out against this new idea and felt it would be a waste of time. Mr. Russom Mesfun, a middle school principal who was reluctant to be coached, quickly discovered that having a coach changed his career. Under his coach’s care, he closed the achievement gap between black and white students and decided to lead his school towards equitable education for all students. He was quoted as saying, “as long as I am a principal, I will always have a coach” (p. 1). In his transformational coaching process, he set a goal for each step of the process he wished to address. The coach and the principal reflected on the goal areas regularly, and determined next steps accordingly (Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto, 2011). After they set goals together, they created a work plan including prioritized strategic activities, a plan of action and determined data and evidence to gather to show progress. It is impossible to know if transformations like the one Mr. Mesfun experienced would have happened without transformational coaching, but data from surveys and interviews indicated that those involved felt the process significantly promoted school improvement (Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto, 2011). This process follows similar steps to what I have proposed to use for our coaching framework within our organization.

**Restructuring and Change**

CRS has been in existence for 36 years, and although much about the organization has changed, the core values and mission have not. CRS still works diligently daily to “close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society” (source withheld for anonymity). When CRS first started, it was one classroom in one school in California. We now serve over a million students in
thousands of classrooms. Although our mission has not changed, how we approach and reach our mission has changed quite a bit over the years. Our need to rebrand how we coach our external partners will require us to communicate a clear and concise purpose for coaching. When rebranding, it should not be reactionary, but instead an initiative that is taking place because it displays the core values of the company (Sheinbaum, 2016). Sheinbaum goes on to say that the rebrand and organizational goals should be aligned. Our core values have not changed but to reach them we must shift our way of work.

As West espouses in his 5 leadership requirements essential for change web log, effective long-term change requires a leadership profile that includes a balance of five key elements. Change requires commitment from top leadership that is tangible and obvious to the staff. Change requires a long term commitment, which does not waiver even if the change takes years to happen. Change requires sustained focus, meaning that even if the delivery looks different over time to meet the needs of the staff and clients, the message does not change. Change requires professional development that is regular, well planned, and sustained. And finally change requires elearning, that is, implementing the appropriate use of technology in the process (West, 2016). The type of change I wish to implement needs all five of these elements, and I have a plan for incorporating them all. CRS top leaders have already expressed support for this change in our support model for our external partners. We are in the process of building a professional learning model based in part on my study of the pilot and the changes that will flow from it. We are strategically creating a support model that includes an elearning component. We are thinking intentionally, about how best to support our staff in this change so that it will be sustained.
According to Eleanor Drago-Severson, adults fall into categories of types of "knowers" and need practical help to be able to learn. The adult might need step by step processes and examples to be able to embrace change. These people are known as instrumental knowers. They might come up with their own goals, but they need those goals acknowledged by someone else. These are known as socializing knowers. They might want us to offer critique on the goals and help them explore other ideas. These people are self-authoring knowers. They might just want us to be present as they explore these new ideas and goals. These people are “self-transforming knowers” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 168-169). Understanding the type of “knowers” the district directors are can help with the coaching and support of those district directors.

I would like to know that each person involved in this process, each district director, is aware that coaching has just given her a tool, a tool for evolution, much like Correia, dos Santos, and Passmore mentioned in their article (2016, p. 9). We want our district directors to be given useful tools to help them successfully reach their goals. We also want them to recognize what they learn as tools worth having. Most studies are not able to show why coaching works, just that it does indeed work. Coaching is as multifaceted as the people being coached, with personalities and needs dictating a variety of outcomes (p. 10). The purpose of the coaching framework is to create a foundational consistency that allows for enough variety to meet the individual needs of each district director.

**Goal Setting**

Prior to the institution of this framework CRS did not ask district directors to create specific goals for themselves around their College Readiness System
implementation. In the proposed new coaching framework, program staff will work alongside the district director to set SMART (specific, measurable, active, reachable, and timely) goals to assist their district and their students (Top Achievement, n.d.). Goals that are internal representations of desired outcomes are pivotal to coaching (Grant, 2012). The International Coach Federation definition of coaching is “partnering with clients in a thought provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (p. 147), and this is accomplished through goal setting and revisiting those goals regularly. Goal setting by the district director assists the coach in knowing the desired end-result and coaching towards that result. When implementing the College Readiness System, there are many facets that need to be addressed, but the setting of specific goals assists in picking a few areas of focus first.

By asking district directors to set goals, program managers will be better equipped to guide them towards success, as they define it. Right now, we often guide district directors towards success as we define it. “Coaching is an opening of a person’s potential with the goal of maximizing their efficacy” (Klarin, 2015, p. 417). It is my hope that we open district directors’ potential and see students reap the benefits through improved instruction, focused learning environments, and targeted change.

A self-transforming knower as a leader understands that all goals are relative and they appreciate the opportunity to learn from others (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 121). In our organization, we have not catered to this type of leader like we should have in the past. We have operated in isolation, attempting to solve our problems independently, without much discussion. This new change plan will create opportunities for
collaboration and learning to happen regularly between employees in job alike groups as well as in groups with their supervisors.

**Leadership Coaching**

Contemporary leadership in organizations requires leaders to have multifaceted abilities to raise to a multitude of occasions. Coaching can assist with that tall order. After 7-9 hours of preventative coaching, signs of burnout and fatigue diminished as reported by the leaders involved in the study (MacKie, 2014). Even though the coaching we will be doing will look different for our district directors, our hope is to indeed reduce their fatigue and burn out considerably.

For the coaching to be most effective, in relation to the MacKie study, the core criterion for change must be identified, which will be done through our goal setting. If the DD does not understand what his goals are and why they are productive goals to have, they will not see purpose in working towards completing those goals. Right now, we try to tackle every aspect of the College Readiness System’s implementation with the district director, causing us to aim in the general direction of the target and hope to hit something. Setting the goals will help us more effectively aim and hit our targets. To positively increase knowledge and enhance effective behavior, the coaching must be specific, with valid measures (MacKie, 2014).

In MacKie’s study he hypothesized that leaders who had leadership coaching would show an increase in transformational leadership behaviors at a higher rate than those who did not receive the coaching. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the skill sets of the first group after they were exposed to specific coaching in building their own strengths and then were asked to enhance those strengths in their
Recognizing their strengths allowed the participants to feel empowered and encouraged to try to master new strengths. The hope for our district directors will be that we help them see their existing strengths and then coach them towards developing new ones to better serve in their roles in their districts.

**Student Achievement**

There are two main ways to use coaching in education: support of students during their individual educational process in higher education, and encouragement of organizational changes and administrative work in educational institutions for the teachers at the elementary and secondary levels (Klarin, 2015). Coaching educators to be better equipped to help students should in turn improve student achievement. After the quality of teachers, the second most important factor in student achievement is quality of school leadership. Making transformational leadership coaching an effective way to accomplish the objective of improving their craft and increasing student achievement is critical (Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto, 2011).

Jim Knight says that, “If student learning is not improving, instructional coaching is not working” (Knight, 2016, p. 28). We should see growth in the students’ outcomes as a result of implementing this coaching framework. We aim to experience positive upward trends for the students in their college and career readiness, and understanding of appropriate next steps to further their education.

CRS’s mission is to “close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society” (source withheld for anonymity). In an Educational Leadership article in 2001, closing the gap was said to mean creating high standards and a challenging curriculum, and employing good teachers for minority and
low-income students (Haycock, 2001). In 2001, educators began to recognize that what students are capable of learning has less to do with their family income or parental education and more to do with good teaching and what happens in school (Haycock, 2001). Haycock discovered that students taught by the least effective teachers, did not make gains in reading and lost ground in math. Tennessee and Texas conducted research that showed that it was not about the students and their backgrounds, but was instead about differences in teaching (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

The College Readiness System (CRS) focuses on helping the teachers and administrators hone their craft in working with students, and the students are performing well. Fairfax County did a longitudinal study of CRS students, who are often minority or low-income students versus non-CRS students and found that the CRS students stay in college longer and have a higher likelihood of graduating than the non-CRS students in college (Fairfax, 2013). (See Section 2 for specific details of the study.) Training the teachers and administrators and then coaching them to continue employing the strategies all year long will have the greatest potential to help principals and teachers close the achievement gap for all students, which is the main focus of the CRS.

In 2015, Haycock wrote about the eight proven ways to close the achievement gap. Fourteen years after Haycock wrote her article, the ways to close the gap had not changed much. Providing a rigorous curriculum and deepening professional development were among the eight, and focus on what the teachers are doing rather than what the students bring to the table (Fisher, 2015). CRS recognizes the value in helping educators become more competent so that the students become more knowledgeable and
skilled. My change project will focus on making the adults better so that the students can reach new heights of learning and achieve what they hope to become.

**Change Management**

Google researched their teams to determine why some soared and other sunk when given similar projects. Their research showed that on the most successful teams, members listened to one another and showed sensitivity to feelings and needs (Duhigg, 2016). In working on creating change in our organization, we must listen to one another and show sensitivity towards others’ ideas and feelings.

We need to support people as they work towards helping them see the value in making this change for the good of the organization, our external partners, and most importantly the students in these schools. Google also determined that “great teams must think, see, act, interact, talk, fail, and lead” (Duhigg, 2016). This must be done in a safe environment where every stakeholder can be given the same freedom to do those aforementioned things.

Everyone will not embrace this new idea easily and without question. Instead, I know that there will be some resistance to change. In a blog about turning around a disengaged or underperforming employee, a list of six steps were given to help make this employee more agreeable. The leader should make a list of what is not working first, helping the employee see what needs improvement. Next, focus on patterns, and in the case of implementing a new coaching framework, looking at which behaviors tend to occur over and over again. Once the pattern have been identified, the leader should ask questions to get to the source of the problem. The change plan asks our internal staff to coach our external partners, but the coaching needs to happen internally as well, and the
coach needs to transition between feedback and coaching in order to help meet the goals of the internal staff member as well. After some coaching, concrete feedback is a necessity. The sixth step simply says to “rinse and repeat,” meaning go back over all the steps each time a new issue arises (Lighthouse, n.d.).

When attempting change, it is also important to reward those who are embracing the change. People need to know that they are valued and be celebrated (Mautz, 2016) so that they will be willing to try repeatedly the task again and again. In this change plan, we need our employees and our district directors to try a new way of work. We need to celebrate and reward both groups along the way to help them stay motivated to try this new way of work.

Change management needs to be owned by everyone. It is not the domain of Human Resources, but instead a team effort. Some disruption is required to make true change, and can come from virtually anyone, making it potentially dangerous as well. The difficulty of change requires that it be managed carefully by leaders so that the change does not actually end up managing them. For change management to be successful, it also cannot always start with senior decision makers, but must instead start in the field. In our organization, the need for this change was brought up by our program staff, and then supported by senior leadership, not the other way around, creating for the people who need to make the change a clearer purpose. (Bauer, 2016).

In an article titled, Requiring Collaboration or Distributing Leadership?, Anne Kennedy talks about the value of drawing upon and building on the expertise of the field (2011). She recognizes that employees hold the majority of the institutional knowledge that can make change effective, but they are not always given the freedom to use that
knowledge to help make the change better. We need to recognize and utilize the expertise of our employees. This is important for the change to be properly accepted and managed by our staff. We cannot get bogged down in the one size fits all model for developing teams, and instead use the existing expertise to design what will work best for the situation (Kennedy, 2011).

The book *Switch*, has a chapter called “Shrink the Change,” and in it the authors challenge the reader to find ways to make the task at hand feel smaller. If you really want someone to do something for ten minutes, start by asking for five minutes. If you wish for people to lose two pounds a week, begin by celebrating the loss of one pound (Heath & Heath, 2010). This concept can be applied to my change project as well. We have never asked our school district directors to set goals of any kind, so asking them to now set goals may seem burdensome. But, if we adopt Heath and Heath’s concept of shrinking the change, and ask the DDs to set at least one goal, and no more than five, we will make progress towards our desired outcome of more successful CRS implementation. I have often heard Dr. James Schott, a former superintendent of Orange County Schools in Florida and current university professor, say that “having more than three to five goals can have the effect of having no goals at all. The more you have the less focus you can put on the most important ones” (J. Schott, personal communication, 2017). The number of goals set for the DDs need to be logical and appropriate to the needs of the DD, following Schott’s rule.

**Conclusion**

Coaching, although not a new concept, will have new meaning for CRS staff when this coaching framework gets implemented. The shift will require internal
employees and external partners to embrace change and a new way of work. Although the shift will require multiple levels of buy in from various stakeholders, I believe that if we carefully utilize Kotter’s (1996) ideas on *Leading Change*, we will see a positive acceptance of a new way of work in our organization. We need to establish a sense of urgency both internally and externally, create a guiding coalition of executives in our organization, develop a strategy, communicate our vision for change, remove obstacles and empower broad based action, generate short term wins, produce additional change, and anchor new approaches in our culture (p. 21). Working through this plan will help us ensure that our change will stick and have a positive impact on our organization and its clients.
SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Findings

For this paper, I conducted a pre and post survey with all the program managers and state directors at CRS. This survey asked program staff members about their comfort level with the coaching framework and their needs for further training. I also interviewed 4 program managers and 4 district directors to determine their interpretations and feelings about the shift to the new framework and its potential results. I gathered both quantitative and qualitative data in my survey, while the interviews were strictly qualitative in nature.

For my change leadership project, I not only designed the new coaching framework for the purposes of this paper, but also had the opportunity to implement with a trial group and then conduct a roll out with the program staff within the organization. The implementation began in April with all staff members and was expected to be used with external partners (districts) beginning in August of 2016. The interviews were conducted at the very beginning of implementation so that I could capture the perceptions of the interviewees. The surveys were given twice, once in August, when the process was very new, and once in December when the program managers had a semester to work with the new framework. In this section of my paper I discuss the results of those interviews and surveys as well as my interpretations of the results.

Surveys

I administered a survey to our CRS program support staff once in August and once in December, to collect data on perceptions before implementing the new coaching framework and after experiencing the process for a semester. In August 46 of the
requested 59 people took the survey, representing a 78% completion rate. Among those who took the survey, 33 hold the title of program manager, 8 were state directors and 4 have a title of other to protect their anonymity. When the survey was given in December two of the original potential survey takers no longer worked for the company so I only sent the survey to 57 people. In December, 44 people completed the survey, yielding a 77% completion rate. Of those who completed the survey, 31 were program managers, 9 were state directors, and 4 were “others.”

I asked the participants in Question #1 of the pre and post survey to identify their primary division, which I am labeling A, B, C, and D for anonymity purposes. In addition to the divisions, I also included headquarters as a separate division. Division A had 11 people complete the survey in both August and December. Division B had 13 people complete the survey in August and 9 people completed it in December. In Division C, 11 people completed the survey in August and 13 people in December. Division D had 8 people complete the survey both times it was given. I administered the survey to three Headquarters staff using Smartsheet as well. This group included, those persons who had “other” job descriptions, which was determined in question four.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey completion</th>
<th>Division A</th>
<th>Division B</th>
<th>Division C</th>
<th>Division D</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys completed in August</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys completed in December</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Question #2 of the pre and post survey, I asked participants how long they had worked for CRS. The distribution was that five of the people who completed the survey
in August had been a CRS employee for under one year and only one fell into that
category in December. Eleven people who had been with CRS for 1-2 years completed
the survey in August and 12 people in this category completed it in December. Of those
who have been with the organization for 2-5 years, 17 people completed the survey in
both August and December. Of employees who have been with the organization for 5-10
years, nine completed the survey in August and 10 completed it in December. Of
employees who completed the survey who had been with CRS for 10-15 years, two
completed the survey in August and three in December. One person who had been with
CRS for more than 15 years completed the survey in August and December. CRS does
not have very many employees who have worked for the organization for more than 10
years, but of those that fell in that category I got a high response rate. The majority of the
CRS staff have worked for the organization for 2-5 years, with the 1-2 and 5-10 year
groups being nearly equal in number.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Number (August)</th>
<th>Number (December)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although all of the program staff members had an education based background
prior to working for CRS, the roles they played varied. I asked the participants in
question 3 of the pre and post survey to select all the job titles they had held prior to
working for CRS. In August, 32 of those surveyed were teachers, 14 were school based
administrators, which includes principals and assistant principals, 24 were district level administrators (which includes the role of district director), and 10 selected “other.” In December, the numbers shifted somewhat, indicating that there were some different participants completing the survey the second time it was given. This time, 36 participants had been teachers, 20 held administrator roles, 19 served as district level administrators, 1 was a former superintendent and 15 indicated “other” for previous positions held. The purpose of this question is to show the variety of job roles and experiences held by the personnel. CRS employs people with an array of previous job experience in the field of education. Each person’s prior experience brings skills to the table that are unique and give them a different understanding of how to interact with external partners. The biggest majority of the participants had been teachers at some point in their careers. The next largest group had been district level administrators.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous occupations</th>
<th>Number (August)</th>
<th>Number (December)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Based Administrators</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Level Administrators</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the survey in both August and December, I asked participants in Question #5 on which components of the framework would they like to have additional training. These would be potential professional learning opportunities offered by the company either in small groups, large groups, or one on one. Participants could select as many answers as they felt appropriate. In August, 18 people wanted additional training
on specific parts of the framework, 11 wanted training specific to coaching, 8 needed more support on specific resources, 4 would have appreciated one on one training using the coaching framework, 14 wanted to observe other program managers using the framework, and 12 indicated they wanted “other” training.

In December, the number distribution shifted slightly. Only 12 people wanted training on specific parts of the coaching framework instead of 18 and 6 people wanted training on coaching instead of 11. One possible reason for this shift could be that program staff felt more comfortable executing the framework and coaching districts after a semester of practice with the process. Ten people still wanted training on specific resources, which was an increase from August. No one in December felt it necessary to have one on one training. The number of people wishing to observe other program managers increased by five, from 14 to 19. The number who indicated they need some “other” type of training increased by three people.

If the participants indicated “other” I asked them to indicate what “other” might include. I grouped the responses into themes. In both August and December 15 people chose to give information in the “other” explanation area. I will theme the responses first for August and then for December.

In August, two major themes came to light, with a few other comments being made towards other training options. Seven people said that they would like to have more opportunities for collaborative conversations with other program managers. These conversations might be role play opportunities, debriefing of prior experiences, or best practice sharing. These types of conversations would help them “learn how to use the framework.” The second most popular response was that “no additional training is
needed at this time,” and this response came up five times. Other ideas that were mentioned by two people were opportunities to coach other internal staff members, which could potentially be coupled in the first theme as well.

The second theme was to simply “get started with using the framework,” which would help people understand what they need in terms of support. Two people also mentioned needing more user-friendly technology to make this process smoother. The organization did purchase new equipment for all program staff members and has provided training since the August survey. One person did mention wanting a place “to get questions answered” and another mentioned wanting more specific templates to use with DDs.

The additional training that was requested or needed by the team was addressed through divisional training opportunities. The group also had the chance to have collaborative conversations with other program managers during the internal professional learning events that were already scheduled for the school year. This survey allowed informed decisions to be made about the types of trainings to offer around coaching.

In answer to the first theme in Question #5, concerning the desire to have opportunities for collaborative conversations with other program managers, training that involved role play and time to discuss the framework with colleagues did take place in September of 2016. The training was well-received and the same type of training happened again in January of 2017 as a follow up to the September training.

In December, one of the same themes came up again. Eight people requested collaborative time with colleagues and their desired training. One of those eight people
said that, “I think collaborative time would be helpful but it is not necessary for me to be able to execute the framework. I feel completely prepared for that.”

The rest of the answers did not fall into specific themes with multiple responses. Three people did mention that they would like more practice to refine the process, but the rest of the responses were mentioned by one or two people. Two people requested digital resources that would be easy to access and use. Two people requested a list of which resources are mandatory versus suggested within the toolkit. Two people wanted to know more about how to coach and ask questions instead of telling sites what they should do in a directive manner. Based on the responses, the most valuable thing the company can do is provide opportunities for program staff to learn from one another.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training needs</th>
<th>Number (August)</th>
<th>Number (December)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training on specific parts of the coaching framework</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on coaching</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific resources</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One on One training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations of other Program Managers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Question #6, I asked the participants rank their comfort level with the coaching framework in August and again in December. The participants had a Likert scale response of 1-5 from which to choose their response. The rankings options were as follows; 1. I do not feel I know enough about the framework to use it, 2. I know a little bit about the framework but would like more training, 3. I can use the framework, 4. I am comfortable using the framework without assistance, 5. I could teach someone else how
to use the framework. Table 8 shows the raw results of the survey for this question. I chose to include this table for the purpose of showcasing the range in responses. It is noteworthy that no one selected “1” as their response in August or in December and that the people who answered “2” seemed to shift to “4” from August to December.

Table 5

**Knowledge ranking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Number (August)</th>
<th>Number (December)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (I know little to nothing)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (I could teach someone else)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows the mean responses of the same question, ranking comfort level with the use of the framework. In August, the mean response to this question was 3.28, indicating an average response of “I can use the framework,” leaning closer to needing more training. In December, the mean response was 3.77, still indicating an average response of “I can use the framework,” but leaning closer to “I am comfortable using the framework without assistance.” I conducted a one tailed t-test on these responses, and got a P-value of .0056 which is statistically significant. Through training and the use of the framework, the program staff became more comfortable with the framework and showed a statistically significant increase in comfort level.

Table 6

**Overall responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>August Mean Response</th>
<th>December Mean Response</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Participants</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.0056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to looking at the group responses as a whole, I also looked at the responses by division and by number of years working for CRS. Splitting the participants into these groups decreased my n significantly, so even though in every group the mean response to the question increased, it was only statistically significant for one division (p=0.015) and the group of employees who have been with CRS for 2 years or less (p=0.042). I have indicated the statistically significant responses in red. I felt it was worth showing these numbers broken down in this way to show that every group, regardless of number of years as a CRS employee or where in the country they work found their knowledge to have increased in the four months they used the coaching framework.

When looking at the responses by division, it appears that Division C was the most comfortable with the new process by December. This division did do some additional training around the framework, supporting those results. Headquarters felt the least comfortable with the process, which again makes sense because they do not work with external partners in this capacity regularly.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>August Mean Response</th>
<th>December Mean Response</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division A</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division B</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division C</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td><strong>0.015</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division D</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers in red are statistically significant.*

I found it noteworthy that the group working with the organization for 2-5 years actually showed the most comfort with the framework. I believe that is because the
newer employees were not yet comfortable with their jobs and the employees who had worked for five or more years with CRS were not comfortable with change. Conversations with employees about the framework supported my thinking on those results.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years with CRS</th>
<th>August Mean Response</th>
<th>December Mean Response</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2 Years with CRS</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years with CRS</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 5 Years with CRS</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers in red are statistically significant.*

Question #7 was the final question asked in August, and I analyzed it later in this section, but Question #7 in December ask participants “what opportunities do you see for improvement to the goal support (coaching) framework now that you have worked with it for a semester?” It would not have been appropriate to ask this question on the August survey since only the pilot group had used the framework at that time. When asked in December, this question did expose some interesting themes.

Three themes came from Question #7’s responses in the December survey. The first had to do with refining the process, the second with resources for the process and the third referred to the amount of time the process takes. There were 36 responses to this question. Of the 36 responses three people said there were “no” opportunities for improvement and one person said that he was not sure what the improvements might be.

Twelve of the people who answered this question said that they would like to see some refinement of the process. Examples they gave included brainstorming with other program managers about how they are handling logistics, ways to become more efficient
with the process, more ways to give feedback, space to share best practices with other staff members. When this survey was given the staff had been using the process for about four months. It became clear through the responses to this question that after some practice, people see ways to improve the existing process. These types of refinements were taken into consideration when training was planned for the staff and a cross functional coaching committee was created to help determine how to execute the suggested changes.

The second theme that came from the responses to Question #7 was the need for improved or additional resources. Nine program staff members mentioned that they would like to see things like more flexibility with the forms used with coaching, specific ways to get the district directors to take ownership of the process, videos to help guide the process, and clear examples of how to give meaningful feedback. Again, these needed resources have since been addressed and created by the coaching committee and continue to be refined as the organization moves forward with using this process with external partners. It is logical to me that a quarter of the people who responded want additional resources, because not everyone came in with the same level of understanding on how to coach.

The third theme on Question #7’s responses was time. Five people felt that four intentional interactions were too many. This group felt that some district directors only need two interactions while others might need five or six. The coaching committee is working to address the varying needs of district directors, but as of now the standard is still four interactions per year. Those interactions can be virtual or face to face to aid with time and flexibility.
In addition to the themed responses a few people responded with answers that did not fit in a theme. One person wanted to know how to help district directors shift their mindset to one where coaching was accepted. To date, the district directors had not been coached but instead told how to implement the College Readiness System. A couple participants also mentioned wanting help organizing their time and resources, which has again been addressed by the coaching committee. Overall the opportunities for improvement have been taken into consideration and incorporated into training for the staff since this survey was completed.

In December, I asked the staff in Question #8 if they felt that the coaching framework had been “beneficial when working with external partners”. I did not ask this question in August, because they had not yet used the framework when working with external partners. Every response has been favorable or logistics related. Of the 44 people who responded, 39 said “yes” and 5 were “undecided.” No one answered “no” to that question. It is noteworthy that nearly everyone found the framework to be useful, since they had only been working with the framework for four months. This was the first major change like this that the company had every experienced.

I followed question 8 by asking the participants to justify their answer to, “has the use of the coaching framework been beneficial when working with external partners” with opportunities to improve the framework. Thirty-six people chose to respond. Several of the responses allowing me to put them into themes. I noted three categories of responses; those related to training, those related to logistics, and those related to resources. Four people who answered this question answered it with the word “none.”
The additional training theme came up in a variety of ways. Five people mentioned wanting continuous professional learning to be offered during monthly team meetings as a standing agenda item. Four people requested chances to brainstorm with other program staff members, which I also discovered when people answered the question that was specifically written about training.

A few program staff members wanted to have very specific training on things like “how to coach teams when the DD” is ineffective,” or “tips on how to be more efficient with time,” or “additional practice with goal setting.” Because these specific requests were made by more than one person, I recommend the company look into ways to offer these sorts of training opportunities. Two people want to have more calibration among program managers in how they execute the framework. This is noteworthy because prior to the introduction to this framework, there was no calibration between program managers at all, and now team members see value if having even more. This notes a paradigm shift among program staff members.

The logistics responses were the second most popular responses. Five people mentioned that there needs to be flexibility with the number of interactions made with DDs. They felt that some might need more or less than four interactions to be successful. Three people wanted to know more about how to track and organize their visits. Two people want to know more about how to balance working with the DDs and working directly with schools, which was how interactions were often done prior to the framework. This indicates a paradigm shift for both the program staff and the external partners, and has required some shifting in thinking. One person talked about the need for hosting “focus groups of DDs who have similar goals” rather than always working
one on one with each district. When I created the framework, I intended for these types of focus groups to happen naturally. The final logistics related statement had more to do with the semantics of calling the four “.touches” which was the original term to four “intentional interactions” and that shift indeed took place between August and December.

The third theme specifically dealt with the resources provided to carry out the framework. Three people wanted to see exemplars of high quality feedback to better hone their skills in giving feedback. Two people wanted clarity around the resources and suggested refining what already exists. Two people requested that there be flexibility in the forms that are used with the framework. One person requested technology resources for the DDs to better be able to carry out the work after the coaching interactions. All these requests will be considered and carried out by a team of people who will be working with the coaching framework for the next 18 months. These people represent all four divisions and several departments in the organization, and it will be their job to determine which resources need to be refined and revised or created to meet the needs of those using the framework.

Question #9 asked “how has using the goal support (coaching) framework altered your work with external partners. Of all the questions asked, this one was the telling of the need for a coaching framework. Forty-one people chose to answer this free response question. The biggest majority of the responses fit into a single theme and four people said that this has not altered their work at all.

The single theme that came to light in the responses to this question stated that the coaching framework had made the program staff members work with external partners more intentional and focused. Words like “responsive, systematic, thoughtful, focused,
structured, strong and intentional” were used repeatedly in the responses given. Of the 41 responses, 27 people mentioned these types of words. They mentioned the increase in communication with partners as a positive result of this new way of work. Also, deeper conversations are held on a more regular basis with all district directors instead of just the ones that used to seek out support.

Although not a true theme, four people did mention that this new process shifts the responsibility to the district director from the program staff member, which is noteworthy because prior to this coaching framework program staff members were trying to carry the majority of the load of implementation of the College Readiness System even though they are not employees of the district and their time in the district was extremely limited. The coaching framework has shifted the responsibility to the district director but still supports that person to be successful.

In response to Question #9 people also said that they appreciated that the coaching framework was not a “one size fits all” process and allowed for differentiation. They mentioned that it was time-intensive, but their time was better spent when using it. One person mentioned that he will not use all the resources, but that was never the intent of this coaching framework. A plethora of resources was provided so that program staff had choice in what they used. Overall, program staff felt that this coaching framework has altered their work with external partners in a positive way.

My final question on the survey, both in August (Question #7) and December (Question #10), opened the floor for people to voice their concerns about the framework and its implementation, although worded differently. In August, 28 people responded to Question #7 of the survey, which was “what opportunities or suggestions for
improvement to the coaching framework do you have?” Again, their responses fell into three themes, training, resources, and logistics, and again the company addressed many of their concerns between August and December.

In terms of training, the number one answer, made by five people was the need to role play to “practice, calibrate and discuss scenarios” to improve coaching skills. The organization provided three different opportunities to participate in role playing around coaching during regularly scheduled trainings. Two people wanted to know more about how to write coaching feedback. There was a session offered around how to write productive feedback during the September training in 2016. Other individual responses included “learning how to move from setting goals to creating an action plan,” “how to apply the coaching framework in a variety of contexts,” and “more time to get comfortable with the process.” These specific types of training opportunities shed light on the needs of the staff and were incorporated into the trainings held in September 2016 and January 2017, as well as ongoing virtual trainings offered to program staff.

The staff requested a variety of resources to help with the work as a response to Question #7 as well. Four people specifically requested easy access to the existing resources, which the company provided using Dropbox and Sharepoint in September 2016. Two people requested videos of coaching interactions to be used as exemplars for calibration. Two people asked for organization options via technology for recording interactions and revisiting them. This response could be both a training and a resource related response. Training has since been provided to help program staff with ways to organize their work using One Note. One person suggested a “months at a glance document” for internal staff, explaining what should be done throughout the school year
in regards to coaching. This type of document will be created once the committee takes over the work in March 2017. The final resource response involved a request for quantifiable data from the field to know that this new process is working. This response triggered the need for accountability to be kept at the forefront of the minds of those involved.

The third theme involved logistics. Three people felt that the DD Questionnaire, a tool used to analyze the needs of the district director at the beginning of each school year, asked too many questions and was arduous. Two people wanted to know a clear plan for roll out within the organization of the framework itself. They felt that they did not know the desired result of the change. One person mentioned that it is important to allow for flexibility within the work. The intent of the coaching framework has always been unity across the divisions and uniqueness. The latter leads to varying actions to meet the needs of individual districts. In addition, this needs to be communicated to all stakeholders.

Four people did say that they felt the process for creating the framework, which included all stakeholders, allowed for a “cohesive product” and they felt that it was “great so far.” Two people mentioned they were not sure yet what they needed but they currently “felt ready.” The organization had not ever attempted to align what program staff did with external partners prior to this change project. Based on the results, the response to this new way of work has been favorable with a need for additional training, resources, and logistic shifts to meet their needs in implementation.

When asked a similar question in December, only 15 people answered the question and seven of those wrote “none” or “none at this time” as a response to
additional needs and concerns. Question #10 in December read “What concerns do you have?” Two people said that four interactions was too many. One wanted ongoing support. One wanted support specific to getting DDs to write SMART goals, one wanted assistance when dealing with resistant DDs. Calibration across the organization was again mentioned and getting DD buy in with 100% of the DDs was called out by one program staff member, saying “sometimes DDs try to circumvent the agenda I have set and go back to the way we used to conduct visits.” In my opinion, the small number of people with concerns and the lack of alignment in those concerns shows me that the additional training, resources, and logistics shifts conducted between August and December has met the needs of the program staff in easing their minds about this process.

**Interviews**

For this paper, I interviewed a total of 8 people. The people I interviewed came from 4 different regions of the country. I interviewed 4 CRS program managers and 4 district directors. I interviewed one program manager and one district director from each division. The program manager from that division worked with the district director from that division. The experience and expertise of these individuals varied and is mentioned in detail in Section 3.

I asked the district directors 11 questions and the program managers 13 questions. The questions were mostly similar for the two groups and a copy of all the questions can be found in Appendix D and E. I have renamed the divisions to maintain anonymity for all parties.
CRS Program Manager Interviews.

I interviewed 4 College Readiness System Program Managers (Appendix E), one from each division for roughly 30 minutes with the longest interview lasting 38 minutes and the shortest lasting 25 minutes. I called the divisions A, B, C, and D for the purposes of anonymity. The first three questions were about the interviewee’s experience with CRS. I asked the CRS Program Managers the same 13 questions in order, and organized and reported themes for questions 4-13.

My Question #1 for the interviewees was, “what is your current role with CRS?” All four of the people interviewed hold the title of Program Manager for their specific division. My Question #2 was, “how long have you worked for CRS?” The person from division C has worked for CRS for 8 years, division D’s representative has worked for CRS just over one year, division A’s representative has worked for CRS for 8 years, and division B’s representative has worked for AC for just under one year.

My Question #3 asked “what did you do prior to working for CRS?” Division C’s program manager served as an elementary and secondary teacher and taught math, and the CRS elective course for 6 years. Prior to teaching, she worked in advertising for 9 years. Division D’s representative was a math teacher for 24 years, serving as an instructional coach for 3 years. His coaching role had him working specifically with CRS elective teachers in his district. Division B’s representative served as a math teacher, coordinator, and department chair at both the middle and high school level, as well as taught the CRS elective at both levels. Prior to teaching she was a manager at AT&T for 10 years. Division A’s representative served as a high school math teacher for 10 years and a high school vice principal for 2½ years.
These three questions showed that there is a variety of prior experience represented in this group, which is indicative of the organization’s staff. All four interviewees were in education prior to working for CRS, even though their number of years were different. What they did for their district shows that they have varying perspectives on the work of districts based on their own experiences. These different perspectives likely alter interactions that they have with the external partners of CRS.

In question #4, asked participants “do you believe that we need a consistent coaching framework? Why or why not?” All four people being interviewed answered with a “yes”, indicating quality and guidance as the main reasons for the need. They called out improved onboarding of districts, clarity of purpose and vision and focus giving by setting goals as the reasons for the need. The response to this question was important because both veteran and new program managers see value in the coaching framework being consistent. Also, two of these interviewees had been part of the pilot coaching group and two had only known about the framework for a few months. And all thought that it was going to be valuable to their daily work and interactions with districts.

In question 5, I asked participants “what could a consistent coaching framework do for the organization?” The most consistent answer was: “improved skill sets for coaching” which will in turn build longer lasting relationships with districts and calibration and scalability. Professional growth and improved work with district leaders also got mentioned by two people. One person also mentioned that this “consistency would help us with branding as an organization”. I see significance in these responses because they showed that in the eyes of these program managers, there are several
benefits to having a consistent coaching framework, but all answers implied improved quality of services.

My Question 6 asked “what could a consistent coaching framework do for our external partners (districts)?” All four people mentioned consistency of service regardless of where in the country the district is located or how long the program manager has worked for CRS, saying things like, “this framework will improve the level of service our clients receive and it will look similar all over the country”. The other benefit mentioned was the opportunity to build the confidence of the district director so that he or she can successfully coach sites without the CRS program manager present. Our program managers are only able to visit schools a couple times a year at the most, but the district director is able to be in the schools much more frequently. This empowerment can shift the dynamic in the district into one of continuous growth because the district director will become the expert as well.

Under our current system, the program manager is often seen as the only expert, which should not be the case. Having a relationship of support is important for the district directors and the program managers. I think it is noteworthy that in these interviews it is seen as something that benefits all parties. One of the program managers said, “my district directors appreciate knowing how to better coach their schools, because I consciously explained to them what I would say to the school, instead of just saying it for them.” This was a shift in mindset for the program manager, because she was used to giving answers instead of asking questions.

In question 7, I asked, “in order to implement the new coaching framework, what supports do you need to be successful?” All four people interviewed said that time to talk
and learn from one another was the number one thing that they needed for this new process to work. They identified ongoing professional learning opportunities and materials and resources as what they need to make this process work. One person mentioned that “support had been outstanding for the process thus far”, but they all wanted that support to continue as they learn the new process. It was also the consensus that practicing this new way of work would be necessary for them to become comfortable with the new process. Change takes time, but it is important to note that all four people interviewed were willing to embrace this change, regardless of their longevity with the company or their prior experience.

I asked the participants in Question #8 “which pieces of the framework concern you?” Three of the four people said that they were concerned about there being a required four intentional coaching interactions. Two people thought that it might be too many interactions, and one thought it would not be enough. The fourth person said that she did not have any concerns about the framework. I was surprised that there were not more concerns voiced by the participants, and was pleasantly pleased that they felt confident after their initial training that this process was going to work to improve their craft.

Question #9 asked “which pieces of the coaching framework interest or excite you?” All four participants specifically mentioned the district director Goal Support Questionnaire as the item that excites them about this new process. This questionnaire, completed the by district directors, gathers information specific to the needs of that DD. This would give the program manager a starting place for support.
The participants felt that this question would guide their work and give them the ability to specialize their support. Two of the four mentioned that they liked the simplified feedback reports, because it would allow them to give district level feedback instead of site level feedback. They thought this would increase efficiency and lessen workload. Those same two interviewees also mentioned they were excited about the support around improving the craft of coaching and interacting with district through professional learning opportunities. All four participants said they were “pleased” to have a structure to work within and guidance for doing so, which is a new way of work for CRS in this regard. The expressed their approval of the process with statements like “I look forward to this new way of work,” and “I feel that this new process will improve my district’s implementation of CRS.” One specifically said, “I have worked for CRS for years and this is the first time I have been shown specific skills to use with clients.” It bears mentioning that although change can be concerning, this change has found support from the four interviewees as well as from other staff, as evidenced by the surveys. However, until the framework is finally adapted, approved and in the implementation stage, the impact and reality of its acceptance level will depend on my change plan implementation and ongoing assessment and development.

In Question #10, I asked, “how might the goal setting portion of the framework shift your support to districts?” As part of the framework, program managers and district directors work together to set SMART goals that will be revisited and revised throughout the year during coaching sessions. Three of the four people interviewed felt that goal setting would improve job clarity and focus for the district directors and would allow for specific services and customization to take place during interactions. Goal setting had
not been utilized with district directors prior to this framework, and the addition of these goals has been embraced by all four people interviewed.

In Question #11, I asked, “how is this framework different from how you previously supported external partners?” In response to this question three people said that these interactions would be more focused and catered to the individual needs of the district director. The fourth person talked specifically about the calibration across divisions and how that did not exist prior to this framework. They noted that districts across the country can expect the same level of service and support regardless of their division. This focused approach can improve implementation for all districts and can improve the level of service received by our external partners. It also assists program managers in determining what the district director’s needs might be, allowing for specialized support, which did not exist prior to the framework.

Question #12 posed the opposite of question 11 and asked “how is this framework similar to how you previously supported external partners?” One of the program managers mentioned that she already did phone call check-ins with her district directors, which is part of the coaching framework now. She noted that the phone calls should now have more focus and direction. She said, “I am looking forward to giving more direction to our conversations, and checking in to see if results are reached.” The other three talked about how they were making contact with their district directors before, which is the same in this framework, but the purpose and focus of the contacts would now have more significant purpose. I want to note that every program manager has always had a strong relationship with their district directors, but now the relationship can meet the
specific needs of the district director by identifying their needs and addressing them. That is a new specified approach to the work that is noteworthy.

Question #13 asked participants “what else would you like for me to know in regards to the coaching framework?” Although these responses do not fit into specific themes, they are noteworthy. One participant said that “change takes time and is not always easy for people”, but in the case of the framework it is “more about refinement than change”, which could help our program managers embrace the new way of work. I discovered through this question that in the other three divisions the same approach to the process of interacting with district directors prior to the framework existed. However, the parameters set by the framework would likely improve relationships with district directors and erase some lines that were drawn within the division. This response had more to do with hierarchy within the division that was hindering work, but that hierarchy has been erased through the expectations of the coaching framework.

One person mentioned that as we introduce change into our organization we need to allow for a designated time to learn the new way of work. Expecting everyone to change how they do business all at once is not reasonable and should be done with some built in learning and wait time. This person wants time to “wrap my head around it and use it with the folks I serve” prior to being required to do so. This person was not a part of the pilot group who did have 6 months to learn the process prior to it being an expectation to use. The fourth person just wanted more clarity around how to ask leading questions to get the district director to create a SMART goal.

After conducting these interviews, I found it noteworthy that the tone of the responses was positive and optimistic. When the organization has rolled new systems out
in the past, they have been met with resistance and concern. We intentionally rolled this process out with the program staff in mind, anticipating their concerns and building safe guards into the training to address those concerns up front. Based on the answers to both the survey and the interviews, our approach seemed to be appreciated.

As was my intent, my study was a significant part of my change process. Taking the time to test the framework started as a bottom up thinking and doing process that has led to the revised coaching framework and its implementation. My study and the implementation of the coaching framework have happened in tandem.

**District Director Interviews**

I will report the answers to the same questions asked of the district director in the same order for the first four questions to set context for each division. I interviewed a total of four district directors, one from each division. I will call the divisions A, B, C, and D for the purposes of anonymity. I asked the district directors the same 11 questions in order, and will be reporting themes for questions 5-11. I interviewed the district directors for roughly 30 minutes as well, with the longest interview lasting 36 minutes and the shortest interview lasting 24 minutes. The interview questions can be found in Appendix F. The first four questions give background information about the interviewees. District directors are employed by each district, but trained by CRS through a program called CRS District Leadership (CRSDL) training. These are not employees of CRS.

In Question 1, I simply gathered information about the roles held by the people interviewed. All four of the people interviewed serve as district directors but they also hold other roles in their districts. The district director from Division C is also the Title 1
College and Career Readiness Coordinator, Title 1 Coordinator and a Grant Manager. Division B’s representative is also the Director of Student Achievement which includes curriculum, instruction, assessment, report cards, and professional development. This person also acts as a grant manager. In addition to those roles, this person is the district director for a consortium of 6 districts. The representative from Division A is the Director of Advanced Academics (which includes Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment, Cambridge, and Gifted and Talented). Division D’s DD is also the Director of Student Services and the Director of Special Education. The role of district director is often coupled with other related duties within a district, especially when the district is smaller. My interview focused in on their role with CRS in their district, not on their other roles but it is notable that these people hold additional roles in their districts that are also impacted by CRS’s implementation.

In Question #2, I asked how long the person had worked as the district director. Division A’s representative has been the district director for 3 years, B for 4 years, C for 6 years, and D for 4 years. The fact that each one of the district directors interviewed has been in this role for at least 3 years shows considerable longevity for district directors. Historically, this role often changes after just a couple years due to other duties, changed assignments, and job shifts. The continuous change requires constant training and varied understanding of the role, its value and importance for the implementation of the College Readiness System.

In Question #3, I asked the district directors how many schools in their district have CRS and how many schools do not. In the representation for Division C, there are 17 CRS schools in a district of 20 schools. The three schools that do not have CRS are
middle schools. In Division B, there are actually six districts, but she only shared with me about the one where she resides. This district has two schools with CRS and seven schools that do not yet have CRS, although she did mention that they are hoping to implement CRS in those schools in the near future. Division A was represented by a large district of 154 schools. Only nine of the schools have CRS, but they are planning to expand in 2017-18. In Division D, the district selected is a small high school district, with one high school and one continuation school. The high school has implemented CRS. Each of the district directors serves many roles in their districts, causing their time for CRS implementation to be divided. Having intentional check-ins with the district directors about their CRS implementation through the coaching framework will provide structure and accountability for what they do with the College Readiness System.

These district directors represent an array of experience and serve a varying number of schools. I intentionally spoke with people from small and large districts to get a variety of responses. Their different experiences cause them to have varied needs from their program staff, which became apparent in other questions during the interview.

In Question #4, I asked the participants if they have completed CRS District Leadership (CRSDL) training. This training takes place in the first 2 years of implementation and equips the district director to interact with their schools and support the College Readiness System. In all four cases CRSDL training has been completed. This means that they are fully trained in how to be a district director. The coaching framework will now provide additional ongoing support to the district director.

Beginning with question 5, I grouped the responses to show commonalities and themes among the responses. As I completed the first interview I realized that Question
#5 and Question #6 were very similar. Instead of making them two separate questions, I combined the questions into one. In Question #5 and #6 combined, I asked, “do you believe that we need a consistent coaching framework when we (CRS) work with you (school districts) and your schools? Why or why not? And what might it do for you as an organization?”

All four people interviewed said that they thought we did need a consistent coaching framework. The reason that was the same across all four was accountability of actions. One of the district directors said that he appreciated that “someone will be asking me about my progress towards my goals.” He said, “These interactions will remind me to work towards my goals intentionally, and will help me remember to hold my schools accountable for their goals.”

The district directors felt that knowing a CRS program manager would be interacting with them four times a year regarding the goals set for the district, it would give them the necessary accountability activity needed to stay on track to continue making the goals a priority. Each district director holds a variety of roles, which means that their attention is divided. Knowing that someone would be visiting with them regularly provides the opportunity to increase their focus and progress on goals.

Two of those interviewed said that having a CRS program manager with whom to share ideas and create intentional goals would improve implementation of the College Readiness System. In a similar theme, one person said that the relationship building was the most important part of this entire process, saying, “My program manager knows my district well and I appreciate her willingness to be invested in our improvement.” He was referring to the relationship between the district director and the CRS program manager.
One of the district directors felt that the program manager’s goals and standards were not as high as her own, and she wanted to see more rigorous standards from her program manager. The significance of the answer to this question comes in the unanimous interest in having a coaching framework that involves goal setting and four expected interactions. They felt it would give an intentional way to stay focused on the goals set at the beginning of the year. In the past, there were no intentional interactions around goals, but instead they had site visits without specific direction.

In Question #7, I asked the interviewees “what do you hope to gain out of the creation of SMART goals for you and your district?” The responses to this question all fit into the theme of accountability, much like question 5, but the specific reasons varied. One person admitted that as a district they set goals but they did not often revisit the goals. She liked the idea of closing the feedback loop by revisiting the goals four times a year.

One person liked the idea of increasing the authentic implementation of CRS strategies through the accountability of someone from the outside (CRS) coming to check on their use. He felt that the accountability would allow for “a more in depth look at their implementation.” He embraced the idea of this change and felt it would produce results.

Another participant appreciated the fact that this setting and revisiting of goals would increase buy in from new administrators. This DD thought his goals would be reached since the results would be tangible indications of progress toward goal attainment. He planned to set goals that would improve student achievement directly, which would help his district see the value of the College Readiness System.
The fourth person liked the accountability for himself. In this case, he admitted that he wears many hats and setting SMART goals that will be revisited will keep him focused. He specifically noted it would force him to work on CRS’s implementation when it would be easy to get distracted by other duties. I was impressed that in all four cases accountability gained the attention of the district directors but for four different reasons. This varied lens leads me to believe that this process will appeal to a variety of audiences for a myriad of reasons. I am encouraged because the organization serves thousands of districts, all with different needs.

In Question #8 I asked “what do you hope to gain out of the creation of SMART goals for you and your district?” Again, 3 of the 4 participants mentioned accountability explicitly. Other ideas mentioned were consistency and improved College Readiness System implementation. The district directors were also interested in how this might increase the number of classroom visits made and CRS strategies being used school wide.

One district director mentioned that he thought this framework would keep him on track all year, instead of just when he is involved with CRS District Leadership (CRSDL) training. During ADL, specific assignments are given to the district directors. Since that stops once ADL is completed, he felt it was easy to avoid what he knew he should be doing. He hopes that will not happen with this new framework. These four district directors all wanted improved implementation from the new coaching framework, which leads me to believe they appreciate having additional structure and focus.

In Question #9, I asked “what concerns do you have about CRS using a consistent coaching framework that involves four specific coaching conversations a year based on
your SMART goals?” Two of the four people interviewed said that they did not have any concerns about using the new framework. They said they saw benefit in the structure and intentionality of it.

The two that had concerns had a couple different concerns that did not necessarily relate to one another. One district director was concerned about the feedback from the CRS program manager not measuring up with her own high standards. She said she would like to calibrate with the program manager prior to going into schools. The framework is designed to allow for that type of calibration to take place.

Another district director mentioned being “overwhelmed because of all the other hats I wear in the district” but was hopeful that the framework will help streamline contact. This same district director also wanted consistent contact with the CRS program manager if possible. The concerns seemed minimal and addressable. Even though the sample size for these interviews was small, the district directors come from very diverse districts and yet they all see more value with this shift in support.

In Question #10, I wanted to know more about how their current support is has been different than the new proposed model. I asked “how is this framework different from how you have been supported in the past?” Although they used different terms, all four people said that their current support system was not as “structured” or “intentional” as the new one. The system they were using did not include a time frame, goals, or intentional one on one conversations. One district director said that this will be a totally different level of service. It appears the served districts had some satisfaction with the system being more structured and thoughtfully developed.
In Question #11 I asked “how is this framework similar to how you have been supported in the past?” One person said that her CRS program manager did something similar in that “she checked in on the district director’s progress” but this version is much “more structured.” Another said that he previously had contact on a semi regular basis with his program manager, but it was not as structured and purposeful. The “value of the interactions in meeting my needs were more by default than by design.” Another person mentioned that the support given by CRS for implementation is “better than from other vendors or organizations”, but he looks forward to improving that support even further. It seems the interactions that happen are seen as similar for both frameworks, but the interactions and focused plan make this new framework and related processes different from the existing one.

Question #12 was more open ended. I asked “what else would you like for me to know in regards to the new coaching framework?” These responses could be grouped into three themes, advice for success, general ways to improve, and questions. The advice for success included one of the interviewees mentioning that the program manager needs to stay positive and encourage all interactions. That same person also mentioned that there should be special attention paid to making interactions authentic and not just a matter of checking a box. Under the general ways to improve someone mentioned that the program manager needs to work to make sure transitions are smooth between people if support is going to move from one program manager to another. She had an unfortunate experience where she went from a very supportive program manager to one who did not reach out for more than a semester. She was encouraged that this new framework would require more contact from the program manager.
One person said that he would prefer only one voice from CRS instead of getting emails from multiple people. The questions asked involved how to coach people who are not doing stellar work and do not really want to improve. These overall comments can help inform how we coach our staff to improve their craft based on the needs in the field. Although they were not necessarily related to one another, the comments can help the organization improve support and interactions.

**Interpretation**

The surveys with the program staff that took place in August, when the coaching framework was still new, and December, when the staff had used it for a semester, teased out a few key findings. The quantitative data gathered about the comfort level of the program staff with the framework, varied significantly in an upward trend in the four months of implementation.

In August, the mean response to the question “do you feel comfortable using the framework?” was 3.28, and in December that shifted to 3.77. The comments for this section showed that people felt well equipped to execute the framework in their daily work with district partners. The level of comfort increased in every category of staff, whether looking at years of employment or specific division. Knowing that every group’s average response went up shows systemic buy in to the process.

Those who chose to comment on this question reinforced their knowledge of the framework by asking questions that clearly addressed the concerns of the stakeholders involved. All levels of stakeholders seem to share an understanding of how the framework could benefit their daily work if used appropriately. The consistent shift towards mastery showed that the needs of the program staff were being met through
training, one on one conversations, and question and answer opportunities. The shift has not pushed all the way to the highest level yet, which also means that there is still training and support needed. Change projects do not happen all at once and require continuous revisiting to maintain a strong level of use and accountability.

The surveys also showed that program staff have positive ideas for how to improve the framework moving forward. It was always my intent that the staff would continue to mold and shape the framework into what it needed to be. The division liaisons created a cross departmental committee to vet the ideas made by staff and determine next steps in implementing them as the new way of work. In my opinion, the only way any change project can work is if stakeholders are able to tweak continuously the process to ensure that the system is practical and well executed.

Some of the ideas that were suggested by multiple parties were quickly and easily addressed but others will require more investigation and thoughtful review. The committee will create a process for reviewing those suggestions and ensuring that they do indeed need to be addressed for the good of the group. They will need to keep the entire program staff’s best interests in mind rather than the need or want of one or two staff members. Those types of ideas will need to be discussed with the specific staff members and alternative options will need to be determined on a one on one basis so that work can be completed effectively.

The interviews with the program managers and district directors had one common theme throughout which centered around an excitement for the focused approach to support for districts. This focused support caters to the specific needs of the district directors which was appreciated by all eight people interviewed.
Prior to the implementation of this coaching framework program staff varied how they approached working with a district, with many supporting specific sites (schools) and not empowering the district director intentionally. Implementing a change could be very difficult for both CRS employees and our external partners (districts) to do. However, this change seems to have been embraced by all parties through the initial implementation phase which began for some in January 2016 and for all in August 2016. A committee of people are working to refine the process to make it as effective as possible. The people interviewed were chosen randomly, which ended with a diverse representation of the program staff and the district directors, and united in their hopefulness about this new way of work.

The conditions and culture that can shift because the implementation of this framework has the support of those using the framework and those who will be supported by this framework. I did not expect all parties in the interviews to be supportive of the shift. The district directors’ previous experience with CRS had varied from constant communication to little or no communication, but when shown the new framework, they all agreed it would help them reach their goal of CRS implementation with fidelity.

The interviewees also unveiled a need to be intentional about communicating with internal staff about change. The internal staff members want to be equipped to do their jobs well, but must know why the changes are happening in order for that change to feel beneficial. They appreciated not only knowing about the change, but being part of the design of the change as well, and specifically mentioned the involvement as one way the change was made easier to implement. This supports the notion that making change by
involving the key stakeholders increases buy in and improves overall understanding of the change (Fullan, 2008).

CRS has never implemented an organizational change like this one. For the last 37 years, processes have been developed somewhat organically in terms of work plans, and this is the first time that program staff have been given a framework for how to work with districts. The freedom that program staff had prior to this organizational system left some feeling anxious because they did not know the expected performance standards, because there were no standards. The framework includes a standard operating procedure and allows staff members to know and embrace expectations.

The external partners said they were being supported by this change. A few went as far as saying that they had not felt assisted prior to this form of support but were hopeful that the coaching framework would improve their own learning. This coaching framework allows district directors to know what sorts of support to expect from program staff, and it allows it to cater to the district director’s specific needs. The specialized support appealed to the district directors I interviewed as indicated by them saying they felt “more valued and supported” under this new system.

Change in a large organization requires thoughtful roll out and continuous revisiting of the new information and expectations. Fullan, in his book The Six Secrets of Change, emphasizes the importance of “connecting peers with purpose” (Secret 2). In the organization in my study, buy in can be increased in the new system by helping people see their role in this change and the value they add by voicing their concerns and suggesting solutions. In addition to connecting peers with purpose, the organization needs to continue to build capacity (Secret 3) by equipping people to do this work
successfully, through the continuous training and role play opportunities mentioned in the
survey results (Fullan, 2008).

A couple of participants in the survey specifically mentioned that they appreciated
how this change initiative included all stakeholders and was transparent in roll out.
Secret five in Fullan’s book is “transparency rules” and it indicates how important it is to
work to create a culture where it is acceptable to experience struggles and work as a team
to solve them, using data to inform the work (2008, p. 101). My survey in December
indicated that people noted that I used data to inform the work and alter training
accordingly.

The most important part of a large change project, in my opinion, is the need to
continue to inform the work using the results of those who are doing the work. Seeing
change as a systemic need, rather than just focusing on individual people’s needs, is
Fullan’s sixth secret. Several survey participants eluded to this need by saying that they
felt supported at all levels with this change, and they wanted to know more about the
accountability portion of the new way of work. They said that they appreciated the
“consistency of expectations” for all program staff, rather than just some. The
participants in the survey referenced the consistent design of this coaching framework as
a “safe and supported” way of work, which shows positive appreciation for the process.

This change leadership project has been happening as I have been writing this
paper. I have interviewed internal staff and external partners and surveyed staff before
implementing the coaching framework and after they had implemented it for a semester.
As evidenced in the interviews and the surveys, the change has been welcomed. The
internal staff members feel as if they have more direction and support, through training
and collegial conversations, to do their job well. The external partners feel better about their interactions with CRS and feel solidly supported in their implementation of the CRS. The executives in the organization feel that the coaching framework has given the needed platform for growth and expansion due to the replicability of the model. Change is difficult, but this change has been embraced and is yielding positive results as stated by the stakeholders involved.

I recommend that the training and practice opportunities continue for at least 18 months. During this time, the company needs to form a committee of program staff members to continue revising and refining the framework to meet the needs of all staff members and external partners. This committee can inform future training opportunities and refine the existing resources by collecting feedback from the program staff on needs and gaps. The committee can also determine what else needs to be provided to make the framework as applicable and user friendly as possible.

The committee would be cross-functional, representing all aspects of this framework. It would include program staff, professional development staff, leadership staff, and technology staff. The committee would meet at least quarterly and would be tasked with ongoing professional learning around the framework.
SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS (TO BE)

A consistent coaching framework used by all program staff in CRS has the potential to create an environment that promotes more thoughtful interactions with external partners, potentially improving the implementation of the College Readiness System. In addition to improved implementation, I see potential for improved professional growth, regulation of services provided to our external partners, and increased job satisfaction. We have been implementing this new coaching framework as an organization for a semester, and we are already seeing evidence of the things aforementioned. Although no roll out or new idea executes perfectly, the overall feeling of the value added by having a consistent coaching framework and taking the time to train people in that framework has been positive.

The "to be" portion of the project articulates the micro-level arenas within the organization that require change in order for the change target to be met. Again, I looked at the, competencies, contexts, culture, and conditions; but this time, I designed options for those four arenas, adapted from Wagner’s change leadership framework that would lead to organizational renewal.

In Appendix B, I have included a detailed “to be” organizational chart that depicts where this problem has been resolved and my vision of the future. In it I outline the context, culture, competencies and conditions for this new work environment. In the next few sections of this paper I have given a more detailed description of the new environment this system could and ultimately has created.
Context

The previous interactions with external partners did not have any guidelines, nor did they set goals for making progress towards a common goal. Using the guidelines of the coaching framework for interactions with external partners, specifically district directors, the implementation of the College Readiness System would improve due to the intentional monitoring and goal setting around the needs of the district. The District director would set goals and then have those goals reviewed with the CRS program manager on a regular basis. The interactions with districts would be focused on common goals, rather than an attempt to monitor all aspects of the CRS. The alignment of the goals set for CRS and the initiatives of the district would have the potential to increase the value to implementing with fidelity and create an opportunity for intentional review. The CRS program manager would have a more focused job when interacting with the district and more targeted feedback will lead to more targeted results. This is Kotter’s third step in the eight-stage process for creating major change. “Developing a vision and strategy,” is much like developing goals. If you do not know your desired end result, you will not know if and when you reach it (Kotter, 1998).

Through the implementation of a consistent coaching framework with proper training for all program managers nationwide, the context of our organization would shift in two distinct ways; Internal CRS staff would know, understand and be able to follow guidelines on how interactions with external partners (schools) should be conducted. Internal CRS staff would also coach our external partners consistently throughout the nation causing the implementation of CRS to improve.
Through training, both face to face and virtual, and continued discussions with one another and with the division liaisons, it would be clear to staff what the expectation for interactions would be and how to execute those types of interactions. The coaching framework suggests four intentional interactions a year with District directors and each interaction revisits goals set in tandem with the CRS program manager and the District director. Each CRS program manager would be given the tools needed to make these interactions meaningful, including training in how to coach, goal setting techniques, and improving relational capacity.

**Culture**

In terms of Culture, my “to be” chart provides three shifts for internal CRS program staff. They are consistency and unity in CRS staff’s partner interactions, clear expectations for CRS program staff in a safe and supported environment, and accountability for the use of the coaching framework as well as acceptance of the changes it requires. These three shifts would help create a culture where it is “normal to experience problems and solve them as they occur…using data as a core part of their work.” (Fullan, 2008, p. 101). A transparent environment for learning for internal staff would shift the culture in a positive direction.

Consistency and unity in CRS staff’s partner interaction being present would assist with replicability and scalability organization wide. The coaching framework would provide specific talking points and ways of interacting with partners that should help align the overall results of said interactions. The goal setting will assist staff in meeting the individual needs of each district.
The why has been and will continue to be communicated explicitly with every training and discussion around the framework. The why has also been tied to the new CRS assessment tool called the Coaching and Certification Instrument (CCI). All districts will begin using this tool in the fall of 2017. When training takes place around the CCI, the coaching framework would be the cornerstone for the training. The internal staff would also be held accountable for using the coaching framework with external partners by the supervisors. This accountability would increase consistency across the organization in terms of our interactions with the school districts.

Setting clear expectations for CRS program staff in a safe and supported environment around the use of the framework should allow for continuous improvement. In the book, *Change Leadership*, Wagner said, “Most of us in the profession of education have never been part of a system or community of practice dedicated to continuous improvement” (Wagner et. al., 2006, p. 25). The clear expectations would allow people to focus on the right areas when they are working with external partners, and the continuous training would ensure that staff feels safe and supported as they attempt to use the framework with external partners.

In addition to positively affecting the CRS staff, the school district directors would also receive more targeted interactions regarding their College Readiness System implementation. These targeted interactions will address the goals set by the district director and the CRS program manager. The goals answer a need determined through walkthroughs and discussions as a team. Instead of receiving generic assistance about things that may or may not be needed within that district, the support would be given specifically in response to the needs of the district. Having targeted support would
enhance the areas for growth in a district, allowing them the opportunity for stronger CRS implementation. Stronger implementation would theoretically lead to better results in their areas of focus, due to the additional support and attention to that need.

Accountability for the use of the coaching framework as well as acceptance of the changes it requires, is the third “to be” in terms of culture. This expectation could mean the difference between a successful implementation and a failed one. Not holding staff accountable for change is an error. Kotter outlines this in his eight steps for leading change. In step eight, Kotter talks about the importance of anchoring change in the corporate culture (Kotter, 1996). If the new way of work does not become the only way of work, people will naturally revert back to what is comfortable and known. Instead, the organization as a whole must hold staff accountable for using the coaching framework through continuous fidelity checks and support. This all would occur in my to-be state.

In addition to holding staff accountable for the changes, the staff must understand the value of the changes to the quality of their daily work. In my “to be” state, they would be. Fullan talks about purposeful peer interaction increasing buy in and understanding around a new way of work. Multiple forms of collaboration allow for people to learn together and embrace the reasons for a change (Fullan, 2008). The more people have the opportunity to talk about this framework with one another, the better they will be able to embrace it and make it their way of work. This too would be part of the new culture.

**Conditions**

I listed three conditions that would shift as consistent coaching modeling gets implemented throughout the organization; Internal CRS staff in home offices would connect with one another virtually using WebEx to learn from one another. Intentional
interactions would improve communication and help shrink the geographical distance between program staff members. Finally, initiatives would be limited to four specific goals and all trainings would focus on those topics. When these conditions do occur at CRS, the employees would have a built-in support system with one another, and they would be given the opportunity to become proficient and well versed with the coaching framework. This proficiency would increase confidence for the program staff as they work with external partners on their CRS implementation.

Internal CRS staff in home offices would connect with one another virtually using WebEx (an online conference system) to learn from one another on a regular basis. This type of thoughtful distance learning would create a space for growth for employees that does not require extensive travel. CRS’s headquarters is in San Diego, CA, but there are CRS employees spread over 25 states. Using technology to train the staff would increase learning opportunities and allow them to be asynchronous as well.

Intentional interactions would allow for improved communication to take place to help shrink the geographical distance between program staff members, since they are spread throughout the country. These interactions could be one on one or in small groups, and would have specific agendas as well as open agendas designed for learning. The interactions could be role play scenarios to improve the art of coaching, or could be problem solving sessions around situations faced while supporting districts. WebEx interactions would allow staff members to see one another and share computer screens to create a work space that mirrors face to face interactions. The geographical spread would shrink with the intentional use of technology.
Limiting initiatives to a few specific goals and ensuring that all trainings would focus on those topics would allow for staff to become proficient in the coaching framework. Currently the initiatives, although aligned to the organization’s overall goals are often not connected to one another. Using the coaching framework as the cornerstone for all learning within the organization will create much needed alignment for the internal staff. The alignment would also positively impact the external staff as people begin to see how What is being asked of them with implementation is related.

Competencies

The competencies that would change if this consistent coaching framework were implemented would include; consistent coaching methods that are taught to all internal program staff using a variety of follow up opportunities for differentiated needs. All program staff would use consistent coaching language. Coaching collaboration would occur every time the team is together face to face and also occurs virtually. These competencies would allow the internal staff to know who to call on if they need assistance and improve their own expertise through training.

Consistent coaching methods taught to all internal staff, with follow up opportunities would increase capacity in the team. If the organization invests in the continuous development of its employees, those employees would be able to bridge the “knowing-doing” gap and create a firm understanding of what is expected of them (Fullan, 2008). Differentiating the learning would allow for each employee to better understand the coaching framework and how it would enhance their prior knowledge and fill in learning gaps. The program staff would then be well equipped to handle this new way of interacting with external partners.
Using a consistent coaching language throughout the program staff would increase understanding and improve interactions internally and externally. The program staff would not just interact with their assigned external partners, but also interact with all external partners in various trainings and workshops. Since a consistent language would be used in this to-be state, there will be less confusion and improved learning for the external partners. “Individual stars do not make a sky; the system does” (Fullan, 2008, p. 65). Those working in the new system would all use the same language to reach the partners needs in a replicable fashion.

Finally, coaching collaboration would occur every time the team is together face to face or virtually, to build the system of consistency. Practicing the coaching framework, role playing with other program staff, and capitalizing on one another’s strengths would be creating the type of system needed to sustain it regardless of turnover and growth. Learning on the job, in context, with other is the type of learning that will stick. According to Fullan, “learning is the job” and the job needs to be done well (Fullan, 2008, p. 87).

The organization has embraced this coaching framework as a way of work that makes jobs more defined and understood. Based on the surveys and interviews, people are eager to learn more about how to make this process fit into what they do with external partners. The external partners are equally optimistic that this system of setting goals and monitoring progress towards those goals through intentional coaching will have a positive impact on schools. Although still early in the implementation process, the system has been well received and supported by program staff and external partners.
SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

I had the unique opportunity of conducting this change leadership project while I wrote it, which allowed me to see some of my To-Be statements come to fruition. Although everything I intended to do did not go according to plan and several things still need continuing refinement, the overall use of this new way of work has been consistent and well received by the program staff. I can base this statement on the responses to the surveys and the overall implementation of the practice system wide. I have been able to employ all the strategies listed in Appendix I in my Strategies and Actions chart. I categorized them by context, culture, conditions, and competencies and shared them below. These are the best practices I have chosen to execute as the organization works to make this change a systemic, long lasting one.

Context

My As Is contextual state focused on the need for a consistent coaching framework to unify the program staff in their interactions with external partners. The lack of guidelines for coaching visits and lack of their consistency resulted in various outcomes. Providing a consistent coaching framework to be used with all program staff will allow my To Be’s outcomes to come to fruition. The strategy that I recommended for context and carried out in part was to provide a consistent coaching framework.

I recommended three action steps to implement that strategy, all three of which I completed. First, I interviewed staff members to determine the best practices currently used around coaching. By asking those who were doing the work what needed to be included in a consistent coaching framework we created stakeholder buy in (Kotter, 1998). I also researched types of coaching to decide on a model to adopt for delivery of
the coaching. After selecting the *Art of Coaching*, by Elena Aguilar, I along with the other division liaisons, planned training for all program staff to become well versed in that process. Having standardized training from an outside resource helped create a sense of empowerment in the staff. Prior to this training, an outside party had never trained the staff. As a third action step around context, I created and incorporated a coaching framework of best practices utilized by our successful program staff and provided training through the *Art of Coaching*. The division liaisons presented this framework to the staff through a series of training sessions beginning in April of 2016. My implementation strategy requires continuous training indefinitely to ensure that the staff is able to hone this craft over time.

In accordance with my To Be context, the staff now has guidelines for their visits with external partners which are clear and concise and were taught through the trainings mentioned above. The coaching framework is also consistent, with four intentional interactions and results are becoming more predictable and aligned because the same framework is being used throughout the organization. The context around coaching for our staff has improved and the To Be context is a reality.

**Culture**

My As Is culture had three main components. First, autonomy reigned over consistency. Second, there was a lack of unity in CRS staff’s partner interactions. Third, CRS staff members felt threatened and vulnerable regarding expectations, due to lack of clarity around expectations. I even found CRS staff members were aware that there was not a system of accountability around making change, which resulted in resistance to change.
I employed three strategies to turn my As Is statements into To Be realities. The first involved creating a sense of urgency among all stakeholders. The second was to survey internal staff on their comfort levels and provide training in response to their needs. The third was to determine accountability methods for the use of the coaching framework by CRS Staff.

A sense of urgency created by school leaders has the power to shift momentum in a change project, but creating a sense of urgency from all stakeholders allows the momentum to be sustained over time. I recognized the value of having stakeholder buy in for this project, so I communicated with all stakeholders regularly about the need for the consistent coaching framework (Kotter, 1998). I communicated this urgency with leadership and program staff members who are and will continue to use the framework in their daily work. The leadership team supported the framework by incorporating it into every face to face training opportunity. The continued presence of the coaching framework in training opportunities helped and will continue to help all stakeholders see the value of its use with fidelity. In the past, trainings only happened once and then the staff was expected to understand all the nuances of the activity. The continuous training provided as part of my change plan improved the implementation of the coaching framework to better match the expected To Be sentiment of the staff feeling safe and supported by the implementation.

In order to survey the internal staff, I had to gain permission from the appropriate parties to do so. I worked with the data and research department to ensure that the questions addressed my desired points and did not raise serious issues with the organization. I also designed a survey that captured the perceptions of the staff about
using a consistent framework. I was granted permission to survey the staff twice as part of my implementation strategies and it captured the perceptions of the staff on the coaching framework and how to improve it. The division liaisons and the professional learning department offered trainings based on the survey responses, which met the needs of the program staff improving their comfort level with the use of the framework.

Creating accountability for the use of the coaching framework required supervisors to agree to a new way of working. The program staff members in the As Is culture status did not have their responsibilities tied directly to their work with external partners. In the To Be culture, the accountability would be both evident and accepted as a monitoring tool for use in the framework. I am currently working with the senior division directors and those who supervise the program staff, on creating accountability methods that will be easy to implement and effective. The directors and the program staff will both have input on the best way to monitor the use of the framework.

Our current accountability system involves setting Employee Performance Goals (EPG). EPGs are monitored by the senior division directors at least twice a year. I will make a recommendation that using the framework be built into the program staff’s EPGs. Some people did this for the 2017 year, but it was not an expectation by the organization. My goal is to embed accountability more prominently in this work.

Fullan talks about the way that Toyota improved performance in all areas of work, stating that identifying critical knowledge and then using that knowledge on the job equips people to do their jobs well. He went on to say the most important piece happens when the supervisors verify learning and success of their employees. In essence, a culture of accountability acceptance is essential to success (Fullan, 2008).
These aforementioned strategies will have and will continue to improve the culture of the organization in my study and change it from becoming more divided and isolated to being more collaborative and supported. As I move forward with my change plan, program staff members will be held more accountable for using the framework, which should increase the consistency and replicability of the level of service the external partners will receive. Moving forward, the accountability system will be coupled with clear and well communicated expectations. Those expectations will be supported with training opportunities which I will outline in the competencies portion of this section.

**Conditions**

In terms of the organizational conditions for this change leadership project, the As Is conditions include having multiple initiatives as an organization; and program staff operating in isolation. Home offices limit face to face interactions among CRS program staff, causing a feeling of isolation. Those home offices cover a large geographical area, increasing that isolated feeling. Too many initiatives and priorities to address adds frustration to the program staff as noted in my As Is statement.

To realize the To Be conditions I am seeking, I have recommended and implemented in part three strategies. I asked to interview four program staff members and four district directors about their past and present coaching experiences. I recommended that funds be reallocated to provide the appropriate training options. I also made suggestions regarding virtual communication and training options to help shrink the geographic spread of the organization.

I requested to interview the staff and the external partners so that I could have a better understanding of what conditions existed prior to the implementation of the
framework and how they might improve once the framework is implemented. I selected
district directors and program staff to be interviewed and created interview questions that
helped to determine how coaching used to take place and what benefits the new coaching
framework might afford to the internal and external partners. The future I expressed in
my To Be statement is that all stakeholders would know the focus of the framework and
how it might enhance the company’s work and be of greater benefit to the school staff
members and students it serves. The allocation of new money or the reallocation of
current funds will allow for the necessary and planned face to face and virtual training
opportunities to take place. The cost of trainings can be substantial since staff is spread
out across the country; but in-service education will help the entire program staff to feel
equipped to implement the coaching framework. The virtual options will not require as
much funding, but the training to use the technology could.

The company’s leaders would need to approve the allocation of new funds or the
reallocation of current funds. This would require their understanding of the urgency of
this project. The strategies used in the cultural changes would assist with this portion as
well. If I can make connections between the initiatives that are being done throughout
the organization with the coaching framework, then the program staff will better see the
alignment of initiatives and stakeholder buy in would again increase. Given my expected
improvement from the services provided to the stakeholders and improved student
learning, the value of these enhancements could justify increases in service costs to
participating districts and schools.

Finally, the online learning opportunities will help to shrink the geographic
locations of the staff, giving chances for intentional interactions between program staff
members. These interactions can be used for learning and sharing of best practices. This action will also increase stakeholder buy in, which was mentioned in the culture as well. The To Be results I am seeking for changing the existing conditions would result in staff members that feel more connected and focused on their training and tools needed to do their jobs well.

**Competencies**

The As Is outcomes sought for competencies for this project have three main elements. The coaching methods program staff members felt equipped to utilize were not consistent and their training needs were varied depending on previous job experiences. The coaching language used by the program staff members was not consistent. The coaching collaboration tended to be irregular and unstructured. I recommended three strategies for shifting these As Is competencies to my To Be state of consistent skill sets through training, consistent coaching language, and ongoing coaching collaboration.

I recommended that CRS program staff members receive training in the nuances of the coaching framework and related resources based on their needs. In addition to training on the framework, I believe that training in the Art of Coaching’s (Aguilar, 2013) transformational coaching skills would increase confidence in the program staff. I also suggested that the face to face time be targeted to hone the coaching skills of coaches.

The first strategy of training program staff members in the nuances of the coaching framework requires thoughtful planning for the face to face time that already exists in the calendar year. I worked with the other division liaisons and the professional learning team to build training opportunities around the coaching framework that were interactive and relevant to the program staff. The To Be competency improvement goal
is that staff members use a consistent language and coaching methods. This intentionally planned training, held in April and September of 2016 gave program staff opportunities to peruse the nuances of the framework and select specific training sessions to meet their personalized needs. This was the first time that CRS had differentiated internal professional learning to meet a variety of needs for the staff. Coaching language became more consistent and coaching conversations took place as a result, which was my intent.

The second strategy involved specific training around the *Art of Coaching*, a transformational coaching style selected as the basis for the coaching interactions in the framework. The author of the *Art of Coaching* partner conducted the training for the entire program staff in January of 2016, giving everyone the same language and understanding of the coaching methods, such as when and how to engage with external partners, and what coaching stems to use to prompt goal setting and critical thinking, they were expected to use with external partners. The To Be competency status continues to be met as the Art of Coaching is method is reviewed in trainings throughout the year. The third recommended strategy involved building professional learning opportunities that are focused and targeted to the needs of the program staff. Now I, along with the other here division liaisons work closely with the internal professional learning team to ensure that coaching opportunities are a part of every professional learning session held for CRS program staff. The division liaisons and professional learning team have worked together to create an 18-month plan for ongoing training as the program staff continues to hone their craft. The To Be desired impact of offering consistent opportunities for collaboration has increased through these actions. As Fullan states, “learning is the job” (2008, p. 87). On the job training works better than any other
kind. The work of CRS’s program staff members is geographically spread out. However, the role playing that happens during face to face training time allows for simulated opportunities to receive on the job training. In addition to these opportunities and with the support of company leaders, I have recommended to all supervisors that program staff members have the chance to shadow one another on the job for training purposes as well.

**Conclusion**

Change, although necessary for growth and survival can be met with strong, and often well-placed resistance. People appreciate and enjoy the comfort of knowing what they can expect and typically do not initially embrace new systems. I have learned that a careful plan that is driven by continuous stakeholder input, and implemented through practical decision making improves the acceptance and execution of change. I had the good fortune to develop and implement a significant change leadership project. In fact, I am still involved in implementing, adapting, and tweaking it to meet the needs of the program staff members. Also, I can report that a majority of the staff has embraced it and described it as beneficial and practical. Creating urgency, getting key stakeholder buy in, transparency and trial and error has made this plan a reality, and though it is still being developed, the foundation has been built for my change leadership plan to be sustained on a long-term basis.


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Appendix A: As Is 4 C’s Analysis for a Coaching Framework at CRS

Context
- No guidelines for visits with external partners
- Lack of coaching consistency resulting in varying outcomes

Culture
- Autonomy reigns over consistency and unity in CRS staff's partner interactions
- CRS staff feels threatened and vulnerable regarding expectations
- CRS staff aware of no accountability and is change resistant

Conditions
- Home offices cause limited face to face CRS staff interaction
- Extensive geographical service area adds to communication problems
- Too many initiatives and priorities to address in time available

Competencies
- Coaching methods used for internal staff vary and their training needs are different
- Coaching language is different based on new staff’s past experiences as well as their expertise
- Coaching collaboration is irregular

Undefined expectations for the creation and use of the National CRS coaching cycle.

Baseline AS IS 4 C’s Analysis for a Coaching Framework at College Readiness System
Appendix B: To Be 4 C’s Analysis for a Coaching Framework at CRS

Context
- No guidelines for visits with external partners
- Lack of coaching consistency resulting in varying outcomes

Culture
- Autonomy reigns over consistency and unity in CRS staff’s partner interactions
- CRS staff feels threatened and vulnerable regarding expectations
- CRS staff aware of no accountability and is change resistant

Conditions
- Home offices cause limited face to face CRS staff interaction
- Extensive geographical service area adds to communication problems
- Too many initiatives and priorities to address in time available

Competencies
- Coaching methods used for internal staff vary and their training needs are different
- Coaching language is different based on new staff’s past experiences as well as their expertise
- Coaching collaboration is irregular

Undefined expectations for the creation and use of the National CRS coaching cycle.

Baseline AS IS 4 C’s Analysis for a Coaching Framework at College Readiness System
Appendix C: Pre-Survey

CRS Program Manager and State Director Survey

1. What is your primary division?
   ▪ California
   ▪ Western
   ▪ Central
   ▪ Eastern
   ▪ Headquarters

2. How long have you worked for CRS?
   ▪ < 1 year
   ▪ 1-2 years
   ▪ 2-5 years
   ▪ 5-10 years
   ▪ 10-15 years
   ▪ >15 years

3. What were your role(s) prior to working for CRS? Choose all that apply.
   ▪ Teacher
   ▪ School Based Administrator
   ▪ District Level Administrator
   ▪ Superintendent
   ▪ Other ________________________________________________

4. What is your current role with CRS?
   ▪ Program Manager
   ▪ Project Systems Coach
   ▪ State Director
   ▪ Other, please specify _________________________________
   ▪ Why or why not?

5. In order to successfully implement the new coaching framework with external partners, what do you still need? Check all that apply.
   ▪ Training on specific parts of the framework
   ▪ Training on coaching
   ▪ Specific Resources (please list)
   ▪ One on One Training
   ▪ Observation of another program manager with an external partner
   ▪ Other, please specify _________________________________
6. Please rank your comfort level with the new goal support coaching framework.
   ▪ 1 I do not feel I know enough about the framework to use it
   ▪ 2 I know a little bit about the framework but would like more training
   ▪ 3 I can use the framework
   ▪ 4 I am comfortable using the framework without assistance
   ▪ 5 I could teach someone else how to use the framework

7. What opportunities or suggestions for improvement to the coaching framework do you have? Please share.
Appendix D: Post-Survey

CRS Program Manager and State Director Survey

1. What is your primary division?
   i. California
   ii. Western
   iii. Central
   iv. Eastern
   v. Headquarters

2. How long have you worked for CRS?
   i. < 1 year
   ii. 1-2 years
   iii. 2-5 years
   iv. 5-10 years
   v. 10-15 years
   vi. >15 years

3. What were your role(s) prior to working for CRS? Choose all that apply.
   i. Teacher
   ii. School Based Administrator
   iii. District Level Administrator
   iv. Superintendent
   v. Other, please specify__________________________________

4. What is your current role with CRS?
   i. Program Manager
   ii. Project Systems Coach
   iii. State Director
   iv. Other, please specify__________________________________

5. In order to continue to successfully implement the goal support (coaching) framework with external partners, what do you still need? Check all that apply.
   i. Training on specific parts of the framework
   ii. Training on coaching
   iii. Specific Resources (please list)
   iv. One on One Training
   v. Observation of another program manager with an external partner
   vi. Other, please specify__________________________________
6. Please rank your comfort level with the new goal support (coaching) framework.

1. I do not feel I know enough about the framework to use it
2. I know a little bit about the framework but would like more training
3. I can use the framework
4. I am comfortable using the framework without assistance
5. I could teach someone else how to use the framework

7. What opportunities do you see for improvement to the goal support (coaching) framework now that you have worked with it for a semester?

8. In your opinion, has the use of the coaching framework been beneficial when working with external partners?
   i. Yes
   ii. No
   iii. Undecided
   iv. Why or why not?

9. How has using the goal support (coaching) framework altered your work with external partners?

10. What concerns do you have?
Appendix E: Interview Questions for College Readiness System Program Managers

1. What is your current role with CRS?
2. How long have you worked for CRS?
3. What did you do prior to working for CRS?
4. Do you believe that we need a consistent coaching framework? Why or why not?
5. What could a consistent coaching framework do for our organization?
6. What could a consistent coaching framework do for our external partners?
7. In order to implement the new coaching framework, what supports do you need to be successful?
8. Which pieces of the coaching framework concern you?
9. Which pieces of the coaching framework interest or excite you?
10. How is this framework different from how you previously supported external partners?
11. How is this framework similar to how you previously supported external partners?
12. What concerns do you have about implementing the coaching framework?
13. What else would you like for me to know in regards to the coaching framework?
Appendix F: Interview Questions for District Director

1. What is your current role in your district?
2. How long have you worked as the school district director?
3. How many schools in your district have CRS and how many do not?
4. Have you completed CRSDL (College Readiness System District Leadership) training? If not, where are you in the process?
5. Do you believe that we need a consistent coaching framework when we work with you and your schools? Why or why not?
6. What could a consistent coaching framework do for your district?
7. What do you hope to gain out of our organization using a consistent coaching framework?
8. What do you hope to gain out of the creation of SMART goals for you and your district?
9. What concerns do you have about CRS using a consistent coaching framework that involves four specific coaching conversations a year based on your SMART goals?
10. How is this framework different from how you have been supported in the past?
11. How is this framework similar to how you have been supported in the past?
12. What else would you like for me to know in regards to the new coaching framework?
Appendix G: Informed Consent for Adult Participant Interview District Director

My name is Christie McMullen, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: Consistent Coaching and Alignment: A New Way of Work for CRS Staff. The purpose of the study is to determine the need for a consistent coaching framework throughout the College Readiness System (CRS).

My project will address the coaching framework utilized with selected District directors. I will use the data I collect to determine your perceptions regarding whether or not a consistent coaching framework has an effect on the implementation of the College Readiness System. I will interview you to determine what type of effect the use of the coaching framework had on your comfort level as a coach.

You may participate in this study by signing this Consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate in one 30-45-minute interview, and up to 5 additional contacts either via phone or email depending on the need for clarification. All information collected in the interviews reflects your experience and opinion as an district director participating in coaching with a CRS Employee. I will audio tape the interviews and transcribe the tapes.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time with no negative consequences. I will keep the identity of the district and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants and the school district. Only I will have access to all of the interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a password protected Dropbox on my personal computer, to which only I have access. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the coaching framework for use when implementing the CRS.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at cmcmullen@my.nl.edu.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: 727 278 3530; email cmcmullen@my.nl.edu; or my address 1943 Ripon Dr. Clearwater, FL, 33764. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu; phone (813) 397-2109; 5110 Eisenhower Blvd. #102, Tampa, FL 33634; or EDL Program Chair Dr. Stuart Carrier, scarrier@nl.edu; or the NLU’s Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 224.233.2328, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

______________________________________
District director’s Name (Please Print)

______________________________________    ______________
District director’s Signature                  Date

Christie McMullen
Researcher Name (Please Print)

______________________________________         ______________
Researcher Signature                                                              Date
Appendix H: Informed for Adult Participant Interview CRS Program Manager

My name is Christie McMullen, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: Consistent Coaching and Alignment: A New Way of Work for CRS Staff. The purpose of the study is to determine the need for a consistent coaching framework throughout the College Readiness System (CRS).

My project will address the coaching framework utilized by you as the CRS program manager. I will use the data I collect to investigate the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding whether or not a consistent coaching framework has an effect on the implementation of the College Readiness System. I will interview voluntary participants from your district to determine the impact of using a coaching framework that involves a set of goals set by the school district director.

You may participate in this study by signing this Consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate in one 30-45-minute interview, and up to 5 additional contacts either via phone or email depending on the need for clarification. All information collected in the interviews reflects your experience and opinion as a CRS Employee participating in coaching with a CRS District Director. I will audio tape the interviews and transcribe the tapes.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time with no negative consequences. I will keep the identity of the district and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants and the school district. Only I will have access to all of the interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a password protected Dropbox on my personal computer, to which only I have access. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the coaching framework for use when implementing the CRS.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at cmcmullen@my.nl.edu.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: 727 278 3530; email cmcmullen@my.nl.edu; or my address 1943 Ripon Dr. Clearwater, FL, 33764. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation, that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu; phone (813) 397-2109; 5110 Sunforest Blvd. #102, Tampa, FL 33634; or EDL Program Chair Dr. Stuart Carrier, scairrier@nl.edu; or the NLU’s Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 224.233.2328, National Louis University IRBB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

Principal Name (Please Print) ____________________________

Principal Signature ____________________________ Date __________

Christie McMullen ____________________________

Researcher Name (Please Print) ____________________________

Researcher Signature ____________________________ Date __________
Appendix I: Institutional and CRS Employees Informed Consent

Institutional Consent to Survey and Interview CRS Employees

My name is Christie McMullen and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to conduct a survey with all program managers, state directors, and a select group of CRS employees from other departments, and interview four program managers about their use of the coaching framework. The study is entitled: Consistent Coaching and Alignment: A New Way of Work for Staff. The purpose of the study is to determine the need for a consistent coaching framework throughout the College Readiness System (CRS).

My project will address the coaching framework utilized by the CRSCollege Readiness System program managers and state directors and how it impacts those involved in four districts. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may need to take place in our current coaching framework districts.

I will utilize the survey data taken once in August and once in December to determine whether or not the coaching framework. By signing below, you are giving permission of me to utilize these survey data in my research.

I would like to request permission to interview program managers and state directors about their comfort level and needs with the coaching framework once in late summer. I will interview a total of four program managers, one from each division and I will interview two who participated in the coaching pilot and two who did not. I will keep the identity of the district, the schools and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the survey which I will keep in a password protected Dropbox, and on a password protected hard drive, to which only I have access. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While CRS is likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of a coaching framework to use with our external partners.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at cmcmullen@my.nl.edu.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: 727 278 3530; email cmcmullen@my.nl.edu; or my address 1943 Ripon Dr. Clearwater, FL, 33764. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu; phone (813) 397-2109; 5110 Eisenhower Blvd. #102, Tampa, FL 33634; or EDL Program Chair Dr. Stuart Carrier, scarrier@nl.edu; or the NLU’s Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 224.233.2328, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

_____________________________________
Director Name (Please Print)

_____________________________________
Director Signature                        Date

_____________________________________
Researcher Name (Please Print)
## Appendix J: Strategies and Action Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context:</strong> Provide a consistent coaching framework to all CRS program staff.</td>
<td>• Interview staff members to determine best practices currently used around coaching.&lt;br&gt;• Research types of coaching to decide on a model to adopt for delivery of the coaching.&lt;br&gt;• Create a coaching framework that incorporates the best practices utilized by our successful program staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture:</strong> Create a sense of urgency from leadership and all stakeholders around the need for a consistent coaching framework.</td>
<td>• Ask leadership to introduce coaching to the staff before every face to face professional learning opportunity, framing the purpose.&lt;br&gt;• Meet with leadership regularly to show how the coaching framework fits with other initiatives for the organization.&lt;br&gt;• Assist stakeholders in understanding the urgency around having a consistent coaching framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture:</strong> Determine accountability methods for the use of the coaching framework by CRS program staff.</td>
<td>• Work with Senior Division Directors to determine accountability methods for the staff.&lt;br&gt;• Add Coaching to our Employee Performance Goals organization wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture:</strong> Survey internal staff on comfort levels with having a coaching framework.</td>
<td>• Gain permission to survey staff&lt;br&gt;• Design survey to capture perceptions of the staff and needs for improving the circumstances prohibiting use of a common coaching framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions:</strong> Reallocate funds</td>
<td>• Determine cost of training for this framework.&lt;br&gt;• Request funding from Senior Division Directors for the 18-month plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions:</strong> Provide virtual communication and training opportunities to shrink geographical distance of the program staff team.</td>
<td>• Offer training opportunities in WebEx and other virtual meeting platforms.&lt;br&gt;• Improve existing WebEx opportunities to better involve home office users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Conditions:** Interview internal staff and district directors | • Select district directors to be interviewed  
• Select program staff to be interviewed  
• Create interview questions to help determine how coaching was done this past year and what gaps existed with and without a common coaching framework. |
| **Competencies:** Train CRS staff in the use and nuances of the coaching framework, resources, and feedback. | • Provide a face to face training with the entire staff on the determined coaching framework.  
• Introduce the resources available to the staff for coaching.  
• Design training to be interactive and applicable to every day work.  
• Share all resources in an easily accessible shared space. (i.e. intranet, Dropbox, etc.) |
| **Competencies:** Provide ongoing training opportunities for CRS staff to hone their transformational coaching skills. | • Create virtual training opportunities on a variety of topics, led by internal staff to hone coaching skills.  
• Assign mentors to newer staff members to enhance coaching skills. |
| **Competencies:** Build face to face professional learning opportunities which are focused and targeted. | • Work with our Internal Professional Learning director to design professional learning opportunities that are inter-related to other initiatives in the organization to help make connections for staff.  
• Create an 18-month plan for ongoing training. |