

**POLICY TITLE: COSSA ACADEMY PROFESSIONAL-DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail the Professional Development (PD) plan for COSSA Academy.

2. Background/Considerations

A. Per the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) official calendar, alternative schools cannot plan Professional Development (PD) days into their annual calendar. This policy stems from I.C. 33-512, which allows alternative schools to be in session for only 900 hours per year, while non-alternative high schools must be in session 990 hours per year. The 90 hours difference allows non-alternative schools to place PD days and adverse weather days into their calendar. COSSA Academy cannot place either into her calendar.

B. In order to offer meaningful PD for COSSA Academy teachers but not violate SDE calendar rules, COSSA Academy chooses to create a plan whereby teachers can “visit” other teachers on a planned, regular, basis during the regular school day. In these visits, COSSA Academy teachers will observe other teachers in their practice and then bring their observations back to share with other COSSA Academy teachers.

C. There are only eight teachers in COSSA Academy, one per subject area. In order to give teachers time with other teachers in their subject area, every other PD visit is planned to take place in another school.

D. Grant Considerations. COSSA needs to comply with Albertson’s Foundation directives that allow us to receive the Go On grant – and one of those is to visit other Go On schools. This PD plan will accomplish that goal as teachers visit Homedale, Canyon Springs, Parma, Middleton, and other “Go On” schools in the immediate area.

E. COSSA Academy administration also desires not to duplicate efforts for actions required by Idaho’s accrediting agency for accredited high schools. AdvancED accreditation indicator 3.7 reads in part: “Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement...”

(1) Mentoring. Although COSSA Academy assigns formal mentors to all new teachers, there is still a need to investigate best practices and then share what is learned with all teachers so the entire staff will continue to learn new practices. The “visits” within COSSA Academy are meant to expose all teachers to each other’s practice, and to provide an opportunity to openly discuss the best that they have seen with each other. Mentor teachers are a part of the discussion.

(2) Coaching. COSSA Academy views the visits allowed in this PD plan as collaborative coaching. Newer teachers visit more experienced teachers’ classrooms to observe how the experienced teacher handles alternative student classroom management, etc; and more experienced teachers visit newer teachers’ classrooms and offer constructive feedback.

F. COSSA Academy administration also desires not to duplicate efforts for actions required by “SDE School Improvement”. COSSA Academy is a “Two Star” school under the SDE school improvement system, and as such must comply with “rapid improvement” indicators. School Improvement indicators that directly relate and are supported by this PD plan include:

IF04 “PD for teachers includes observations by peers related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management”;

IF05 “PD for teachers includes self-assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management”;

IF08 “PD for the whole faculty includes assessment of strengths and areas in need of improvement from classroom observations of indicators of effective teachers”; and

IF10 “The principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers”.

G. Idaho Core Standards. The differentiated pay plan approved by the COSSA Board of Trustees for COSSA Academy states that teachers will create interim assessments in the Smarter Balance test question format by March. One objective that all teachers should have in making these visits is to learn what other schools are doing to incorporate SBAC and the Idaho Core Standards.

### 3. Plan

A. COSSA Academy teachers will visit one classroom per quarter. They will alternate between visiting other COSSA Academy teachers and teachers in other “Go On” grant recipient schools. The objective of these visits is to observe best practices and give direct feedback to the visited teacher.

B. After the visit, teachers will bring back their observations and best practices and share them at the weekly teacher meeting.

#### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Superintendent/Principal. The Principal is responsible for maintaining and updating this policy, for creating the visit matrix, for budgeting for substitutes to cover teachers while they are on their visits, and for monitoring the participation of teachers in this plan.

B. District Substitute Coordinator. The district substitute coordinator will arrange for a substitute teacher to cover visiting teacher classes. In the case of off-site visits, the substitute will be assigned for ½ day, either for the morning or the afternoon, depending on the visiting teacher's plan.

C. Academy Teachers. Teachers are responsible for planning their visits, informing the district's substitute coordinator at least one week in advance of their visit plan so that a substitute can be arranged, for participating in visits, and for reporting their visit findings to the rest of the teachers at the weekly teacher meetings.

D. Mentors. The two formally assigned mentors for COSSA Academy are responsible for ensuring that visit reports are included in the weekly teacher meetings and for forwarding visit reports to the Principal.

#### 5. Budget

The Idaho State Department of Education has provided \$15,000 to enable this plan to be executed. This money will be used to pay for substitutes who will cover teacher visits.

#### 6. Procedure

Teachers will use Appendix A to plan and schedule their "visit". Whether or not the visit is within COSSA Academy or to another Go On school depends on the visit "schedule" developed at the beginning of the year.

Teachers will inform the Substitute Coordinator of their need for a substitute, whether it is for one period (if the visit is "within COSSA Academy) or for ½ day if the visit is to another Go On school.

If the teacher does not know how to arrange a visit to another Go On school, they will contact the Principal who will make the necessary arrangements.

An example schedule of teacher visits and an indicator of whether those visits are within the Academy or external are shown Appendix B and Appendix C.

**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

**I.C. 33-512**

**POLICY HISTORY:**

**Adopted: 10/21/13**

COSSA Academy  
Teacher "Visit" Plan

Teacher Conducting Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Before the Visit**

Teacher/School/Program You Plan to Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

"Contact" at Visit Site (teacher, Principal, other): \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time You Plan to Visit (for substitute coordination, indicate periods gone, AM or PM, whole, ½, or partial day): \_\_\_\_\_

What is your initial objective for this visit: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**After the Visit**

What Did You See That You Would Like to Share (good or not so good)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date visit results were shared at weekly Teacher meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Acknowledgement: \_\_\_\_\_