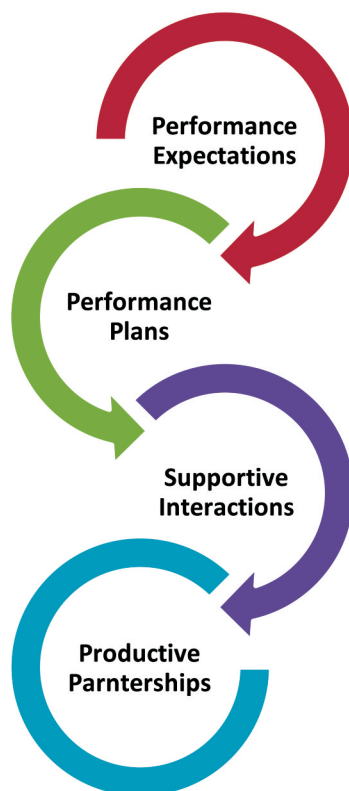


# Leader Support Systems: Refining Models for Developing, Coaching, and Mentoring Educational Leaders

The implementation of mentoring and coaching has been increasingly emphasized as a critical component of developing, supporting, and sustaining effective school leaders. There is wide acknowledgement of the importance of the need for effective programs to provide support for new and experienced school leaders particularly those challenged to function in an environment that requires transformational leadership (Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Crow & Matthews, 1998; Geroy, Bray, & Venneberg, 2005; King & Bouchard, 2011).

One challenge to establishing a well-developed leader support system is the lack of agreement in the literature as well as in practice regarding distinctions between various functions such as mentoring and coaching (D'Abate et al., 2003; Geroy, Bray, & Venneberg, 2005). The ULead West Georgia model for Performance Mentors provides a clear articulation of competencies and standards for an integrated support system that addresses contextual roles, responsibilities, and relationships of various functions involved in supporting novice and experienced school leaders.

The competencies identified below serve as the foundation for a fully developed Performance Mentoring and Leader Support System Model. The model is designed to provide guidance for the selection, training, development, and evaluation of Performance Mentors capable of supporting new and developing leaders in partnership with the leader's supervisors and other leadership development personnel. The competencies are illustrated below as a progressive series of four sets of processes.



- Organizational expectations function as the key driver for developing and supporting school leaders.
- Performance Mentors are able to clarify and contextualize expectations as well as identify development needs of leaders based on analysis of results from various leadership assessments.
- Performance Plans provide a focus on specific expectations for moving an organizational priority forward.
- Performance Mentors provide assistance in the development of these plans which provide direction for the supportive interactions initiated with the leaders.
- The situational nature of personal and organizational development requires a blend of a variety of forms of support.
- Performance Mentors are skilled in discerning the needs of leaders and are able to provide multiple modes of support for different situations and contexts.
- A Leader Support System developed for the purpose of supporting organizational priorities is by nature a collaborative enterprise.
- Performance Mentors must be skilled at establishing and sustaining relationships with all of the individuals involved in developing, supporting, and supervising the leaders.

## **PERFORMANCE MENTOR™ COMPETENCIES**

### **Competency 1: Performance Expectations**

The Performance Mentor™ interprets performance expectations and communicates clear connections relevant to specific responsibilities in context of the Leader's setting.

- Standard 1:** Identify, clarify, and operationalize performance expectations in collaboration with the organization and the Leader.
- Standard 2:** Connect operationalized performance expectations to specific responsibilities in the context of the Leader's placement.
- Standard 3:** Facilitate the analysis and use of data from multi-source and other assessments to identify the Leader's strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Competency 2: Performance Plan**

The Performance Mentor™ supports the design and implementation of the Leader's performance plan that INCLUDES a focus on transformational goals aligned to organizational priorities.

- Standard 1:** Facilitate design of the Leader's performance plan to address data-driven transformational goals that align with organizational priorities.
- Standard 2:** Support implementation of the Leader's articulated performance plan in a manner that reinforces organizational expectations.
- Standard 3:** Monitor the fidelity of the Leader's performance plan implementation.

### **Competency 3: Developmental Interactions**

The Performance Mentor™ determines the types of interaction that provide the most appropriate support for the Leader in the context of specific situations.

- Standard 1:** Provide effective and appropriate feedback as needed to support continued development of the Leader.
- Standard 2:** Model appropriate approaches to support adult learning in the delivery of technical support for specific leadership practices.
- Standard 3:** Implement developmental interactions with fidelity.

### **Competency 4: Productive Partnerships**

The Performance Mentor™ initiates and sustains productive partnerships with the Leader as well as with others who sponsor, supervise, and support the Leader.

- Standard 1:** Establish mutual expectations for effective communication and support.
- Standard 2:** Model personal and professional characteristics of integrity, commitment, and trustworthiness.
- Standard 3:** Facilitate understanding, communication, and effective interactions through interpersonal skills including collaboration and conflict resolution.