# ACTION-DRIVEN CONVERSATIONS

## Purpose
We use Action-Driven Coaching Conversations to create “consistent, positive disturbances” that surface underlying fears, concerns, or patterns of behavior necessary to move our school partners from their current state to a desired future state, and to ultimately achieve transformational change. These coaching conversations enable our school partners to understand the challenges they are facing and to develop next steps aimed at implementation of their theory of action and attainment of breakthrough student-achievement results.

## Implementation Guidelines

1. **Prepare for the conversation**
   - Plan for the meeting and determine your content and relational objectives.
     - Content objectives specify the cognitive or technical issues you will cover during the conversation. This objective is aligned to a set of goals and a clear theory of action.
     - Relational objectives specify how you as a coach will relate to and respond to the affective state of your partner. This includes trust, excitement, ownership, and working through resistance or tension.

2. **Open and clarify focus**
   - Choose a strategic topic to discuss, balancing the coach’s and partner’s wants and needs, and ensure that the focus of the meeting is aligned to goals.
   - During the conversation, practice level 3 listening in order to really understand what needs to be heard. Stay open to new outcomes that surface deeper issues.

3. **Move forward**
   - Coaches are intentional. Assess the partner’s need and utilize the coaching stances. Each stance impacts the capacity of the school partner in different ways:
     - If the client needs to re-frame, broaden, or be challenged → Expand
     - If the client needs to problem-solve, discover, or think → Inquire
     - If the client needs to be validated or to build on what’s working → Affirm
     - If the client needs to think with you → Collaborate
     - If the client needs recommendation, information, or knowledge → Consult

   Our school partners are experiencing change and they may feel isolated, skeptical, or under-prepared. If they are resisting something, ask why. Resistance often occurs when our partners are losing control, losing trust, or feeling vulnerable.

4. **Close and create accountability**
   - Summarize the conversation to help your partner synthesize. Be clear about next steps and ensure that the next steps are connected to student achievement outcomes. Reflect on the conversation and ask for feedback from your school partner.

## Implementation Tips
- Prepare for coaching conversations as if you were a disciplined athlete; draw on your technical skills, knowledge, passion, and heart.
- Be guided by outcomes, but also be willing to let go of your agenda to go deeper in the conversation.
- This framework should be used as a fluid guide to ensure that conversations feel authentic and to avoid letting conversations feel mechanical.
Open & Clarify Focus

Shared Objectives:
- Content
- Relational

Move Forward

Inquire
Collaborate
Consult
Affirm
Expand

Close & Create Accountability

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