

The 2020-2021 Illinois SMART School Academy

Frequently Asked Questions



I. What is the SMART School Academy?

The SMART School Academy is an immersion in the SMART School Improvement Process, with team coaching support over the course of a school year. Incorporating the attributes of effective professional learning as outlined in Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, you will learn the process by doing the process. You will have an individual Master SMART coach who will work with your team to implement the process so that you and your district or organization will benefit immediately by your participation. At the end of the year, you will be fully qualified and certified to be an internal facilitator and coach of the process, thus sustaining continuous improvement of student learning in your organization.

II. Who should attend the Illinois SMART School Academy?

The Academy is open to teams of **two or more** individuals from districts with a passion for improving schools and student learning. You don't need prior training in coaching or in the SMART School Improvement Process to be selected as a participant - that is what you will learn in the Academy. However, there is the expectation that your district will provide the time, support, and resources for you to attend all of the training sessions and to apply the learning to advance school improvement and student learning. Those who have responsibility for leading school improvement in their school or district, instructional coaches, those who support them in the central office, principals, and members of their campus teams are ideal candidates.

III. What will be expected - during and after the Academy?

Participants will be asked to commit to the following:

As a SMART School Coach-in-training I agree to ...

- Participate actively in all of the Academy elements, including the 16 training modules and 4 team coaching sessions.
- Do the assigned work between trainings and utilize the Academy's dedicated virtual site.
- Provide honest and nonjudgmental feedback to the presenters.
- Be forthright in asking for help, clarification and assistance when needed.

As a certified SMART School Coach I agree to ...

- Work with school-based leadership teams to implement the SMART School Improvement Process with fidelity.
- Assist my district to address barriers to implementation of the Process.
- Use my new skills, tools and processes for the betterment of my schools and district only (i.e., not present myself for services beyond my current district or organization).
- Share my learning with my cohorts as I discover new tools and processes while working with my team(s).

IV. After the Academy, what will a SMART School Coach know and be able to do?

Graduates of the SMART School Academy will have a deep understanding of the SMART School Improvement Process and the skills to facilitate and coach the implementation of the process at the school level. They will have the tools and strategies to assist teacher leadership teams through the examination of their data to the development of SMART Goals, and to support a SMART Goals-driven process of principal and teacher effectiveness that addresses both professional and student growth. They will also have research techniques for finding and implementing effective practices in professional learning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and they will have the tools and templates to assist teams to monitor student learning progress ongoing. SMART School Coaches will have newly developed and honed leadership skills that will serve them well in the classroom, with their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and as school-based leaders of learning. A district or organization with SMART School Coaches can develop an aligned systemic goal-management system that is sustainable, realistic and supported internally at a fraction of the cost of bringing in outside experts.

V. How will a SMART School Coach be supported after the Academy?

Academy participants and certified SMART School Coaches will join participants from other Academies as members of the SMART School Network. Network members have access to online resources including upgrades to materials, new templates and protocols.

The Academy is brought to you by

