The 2021-2022 Illinois SMART School Academy

From The Consortium for Educational Change and SMART Learning Systems

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

As an Academy graduate, 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 Academy graduates 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 possess the tools and strategies needed to assist teacher leadership teams through the examination of their data to the development and implementation of SMART Goals. They will have insights about researching effective practices in professional learning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and have the tools and templates to assist teams to monitor student learning progress ongoing. They will hone 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 Academy graduates be supported after the Academy?

Academy graduates 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.

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