



Needs Assessment Summary

District: Bibb County

School: L.H. Williams Elementary School

Principal: Dr. Shandrina Griffin-Stewart

Date: October 20, 2016

Solution Tree Coach: Kimberly Rodriguez Cano

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Part 1

Purpose of the Needs Assessment for Continuous School Improvement

The Needs Assessment for Continuous School Improvement is utilized to determine how the school is performing in relation to the Critical Practices and Guiding Principles to be leveraged in the Professional Learning Community process. The process is data-driven and objectively identifies a school's strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. This report offers specific direction for school improvement based on the findings.

Critical Practices and Guiding Principles for Continuous School Improvement

The table below outlines the critical practices and guiding principles that are foundational to a school improvement process leveraging Professional Learning Communities. Each component falls within one or more of the three big ideas of a Professional Learning Community to include:

- 1. A Focus on Learning
- 2. A Collaborative Culture With a Focus on Learning for All
- 3. Results Orientation

The purpose of the work is to ensure that all students learn at high levels. Helping all students learn requires a collective and collaborative effort. A school wide focus is necessary with able and willing adults ready to implement any needed changes in order for students to reach proficiency. In order to assess the effectiveness of our work and the student progress, there must be evidence of student learning continuously. A school must be prepared to respond immediately to students who need intervention or extensions.

Culture of Success	A culture of success supports a safe, orderly, and equitable learning environment. There is an expectation of high levels of learning for all and culture of doing whatever it takes for each student to succeed. Creating Collective Commitments is a first step in establishing a culture of success.
Engaging in the Right Work	Implementation of an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles (unit by unit) of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Collaboration is the engine that drives the school improvement process. Teams focus on answering four critical questions that guide the process and ensure everyone is engaged in the right work.

What is it we expect students to know and be able to do? How will we know when they have learned?	A guaranteed and viable curriculum (1) gives students access to the same essential learning regardless of who is teaching the class and (2) can be taught in the time allotted. Teachers must work collaboratively to determine the guaranteed and viable curriculum for each course and grade level. The essential learnings are derived from the state standards and broken down into learning targets.
2. How will we know when they have learned?	The teachers collaboratively create common formative and summative assessments to help students acquire agreed upon knowledge and skills. Formative assessments for learning are part of an ongoing process to monitor each student's progress on a continuous basis, to inform the teachers of the effectiveness of their practices, and to provide scaffolding to students. SMART goals are established to monitor the progress made.
3. How will we respond when they do not learn?	A multi-tiered system of interventions in a school wide plan ensures that every student in every course or grade level will receive additional time and support for learning as soon as they experience difficulty in acquiring essential knowledge and skills. The intervention occurs during the school day and students are required to devote the extra time and secure the skills. This is a collective school wide responsibility.
How will we respond when they have already learned?	Extension opportunities are created for students who have reached proficiency with the guaranteed and viable curriculum. This group of students will engage in extensions of learning connected to the essentials.
Shifting From All to Each	School schedules, operational systems, grouping of students, and any activities impacting student learning are all focused to provide each student with the necessary skills and knowledge to become proficient in the guaranteed and viable curriculum. All decisions are made with this purpose as the most crucial goal.
Leadership for Learning	A Guiding Coalition comprised of teachers and administrators will be established to lead and monitor the school improvement processes that ensure learning for all. The building principal is responsible for implementing the Professional Learning Community at Work framework with fidelity. This includes but is not limited to data review weekly, scheduling, protecting instructional time, and supporting teachers with embedded professional development and time to do the work.
Engaging Students in Owning Their Learning	Schools and teachers adopt and ensure a growth mindset to improve achievement for each student. Students set their own learning goals in the form of SMART goals and track their own growth. Teachers create learning opportunities that personalize and engage students in owning their learning, bringing meaning to the process.

Methodology: Summary of Observations, Interviews, and Team Meetings

Methodology	Quantity
Classroom Observations	10
Interviews with Teachers, Administrators, and Students	20.5 teachers (1/2 time EIP) 1.5 Administrators (1/2 time AP) 8 Students (5 th grade)
Observations of Content and Grade Level Team Meetings	6
Observation of School Leadership Team Meeting	2
Document Review	12

Classroom observations, interviews with stakeholders, team meetings, review of curriculum documents, school achievement data, and demographic statistics informed the recommendations of this need assessment.

Part 2

Background and Demographics

L.H. Williams Elementary School is located in Macon, Georgia and is part of the Bibb County School District. The district is located approximately one hour southeast of Atlanta and serves 24, 938 students and employs 1,383 faculty members. The school district is comprised of 23 elementary schools, 6 middle schools and 6 high schools. The vision statement is: "Each student demonstrates strength of character and is college or career ready." The mission statement is: "The Bibb County School District will develop a highly trained staff and an engaged community dedicated to educating each student for a 21st century global society."

This school is currently a 2 star/opportunity school. The grade teams are departmentalized in 4th and 5th grade and non-departmentalized kindergarten to 3rd. The 4th and 5th grade teachers are divided by content (ELA/Social Studies and Mathematics/Science). The school's strengths are in parent communication/involvement and creating a safe and orderly learning environment.

The principal, Dr. Shandrina Griffin-Stewart is in her ninth year as the leader of the school. Most of the teachers have been at L.H. Williams Elementary for over ten years and the current academic coach was a long time kindergarten teacher at the school. The support staff, cafeteria staff, and the custodial staff are also dedicated to the success of the students. Upon my arrival there is a sense of safety and

welcoming atmosphere. My concerns include a unified approach to data analysis, the effective use of common formative assessments to drive instruction, and streamlining of initiatives to support student growth.

Grades Served	PreK – 5th
Enrollment	286
% of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch	100%
% of English Language Learners	0%
% of Students With Special Needs	2%
Student Attendance Rate	95%
Teacher Attendance Rate	99%

Leadership Interview Summary

I met with the L.H. Williams Elementary School leadership team on September 20, 2016 for the initial interview. We reviewed the purpose of Solution Tree's support and how we can effectively use the PLC process and that the purpose of the work is to ensure that all students learn at high levels. We looked at the three target areas that have already been determined (school culture, mathematics, and literacy) and how those support all students learning at grade level expectations. Since it has been determined that a school wide focus is necessary to implement any needed changes in order for students to reach proficiency, the consensus was that it will take an authentic collaborative effort by all. The leadership team indicated there are a lot of structures that are in place at the school and district level. They commend the teaching and learning department for providing a tremendous amount of resources for their teachers and staff including resources such as instructional focus calendars, benchmark assessments, protocols for common planning and professional learning communities, and learning targets for each grade group to mention a few. The leadership team is ready and willing to make the necessary changes to improve the outcomes for all students. I also met with Ms. King, who is assigned to the school from the Georgia Department of Education to support improvement efforts. She shared some of the protocols that are used by the state to monitor the progress of the identified schools. The academic data was reviewed, along with current data analysis efforts and how they supported the Georgia Milestones summative assessment that is given each spring. It should be noted that there is only a half time assistant principal that is shared between two elementary schools.

Teacher Focus Group Summary

I met with the teachers on September 21, 2016 in independent grade teams, as well as, the support staff, academic coach, and paraprofessionals. When asked if the school has identified what they expect students to know and be able to do with learning targets for each subject. They indicated that the district has provided that information in instructional frameworks. They have pacing guides for each content area and have a manner in which they progress monitor student progress via a data management program every nine weeks.

When asked about common formative assessments teachers responded that they do use common formative assessments, however I was not clear on if they knew how to assess specific learning targets to ensure the mastery of the overall standard especially in Reading and Language Arts. They also indicated that they had many resources and protocol to support quality classroom instructional practices. I had the opportunity to also interview the support staff which included Mr. Dixon, the Family Engagement Specialist along with EIP (Education Intervention Program) teachers. This small group does take on a lot of responsibility when it comes to managing students that are struggling academically. They do work with many students that are behind in both mathematics and reading, but have some disconnect to generalizing skills back into the classroom.

Mr. Jackson, the PE Coach, who works with all grade levels, integrates some universal writing strategies into his class-time. The Media Specialist, Ms. Orr, could be source of increased support at the school with the opportunity to reinforce literature and reading lessons.

Student Focus Group Summary

On October 20, 2016 I met with 5th grade students in the media center. Typically students of this age are not as candid; however the students from L.H. Williams were definitely the exception to this rule. This group of students was extremely polite and respectful and seemed very happy to be selected for this interview process.

When asked what the teachers and staff do to help them do better in school, the students' responses are as follows:

- They make me feel safe
- They help me learn
- We have a wonderful principal
- They like that they get a ribbon for A/B honor roll

- I like the end of the year parties
- I like the field trips (Museum of Aviation)
- I like the parent volunteers that help with learning

When asked what could be done better in order to improve your school, they shared the following:

- Have two hours of reading, to increase vocabulary and grammar
- Reading at the end of the day
- More computer based assessments
- More books in library (history, biography, fiction, and non-fiction)
- More science and history lessons

I was pleased with the level of honesty and clarity that the students possessed. Based upon the student focus group interview, I believe that the students are happy about being enrolled at L.H. Williams Elementary School. They indicated feel safe and welcomed each day.

Parent Focus Group Summary

On October 20, 2016 I conducted interviews with four mothers of students at L.H. Williams. A couple of the parents had multiple students in attendance or had former students that matriculated to middle school. When asked if they believe that the teachers at your child's school have the skills to help your children succeed in school. Why or why not? The responses were as follows:

- Yes, but you can always improve especially with dismissal routines
- I like that I am always greeted with friendly/smiling faces
- Yes, the teachers work with students that are not doing well
- I like that the school has students behaving and help them with interventions

I found it interesting that some of the responses and casual conversations were around the "feeling" that the school environment has. All of the parents felt welcome and thought their students were truly cared for while at school.

When asked what suggestions or concerns do you have that could help this school do a better job of preparing students for the future. They indicated that they would:

- Like to have more parents involved in the school
- More opportunities for struggling students to improve
- Better dismissal for students who walk to school (dismissal earlier)
- Parent workshops for those parents who do not know how to help their child at home

I believe these parents were authentic with their answers. One of the mothers is a regular volunteer at the school and typically serves at least three days a week.

Part 3

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Walkthrough Summary

Instructional Rounds

Observer: Kimberly Cano Grade/Subject: 6th -8th Date: 9/20/2016

Stimulus Observed - What are students doing? (Engaged in dialogue, independent, worksheet, project based, manipulatives, writing, reading, etc.)

Observation of Students:

Taking tests (1 classroom)

Discourse with peers (2 classrooms)

Students working in groups (2 classrooms)

Independent reading (2 classrooms)

Reviewing prior lesson (3 classroom)

Cognitive Demand - Highlighted observed/facilitated

Analysis/Interpret Apply Cause/Effect

Compare/Classify/Categorize Create/Develop Draw Conclusions

Generalize Infer Justify/Evaluate

Make Connections Summarize Predict/Estimate Sequence/Order

Synthesize Other (explain)

Locus of Control – Who is responsible for most of the Thinking/Talking? Teacher/Students? Note Evidence observed.

Teachers are responsible for most of the thinking. Of the classrooms visited the majority were teacher led classrooms. Teachers were managing the cognitive demand with students taking little lead/responsibility for their learning. In some classrooms students were seated in collaborative structures, but worked independently.

Learning Targets – What is the connection between what the students are doing and the posted learning target?

There were "I can..." statements displayed in almost all classrooms, however I did not observe any connection with student engagement during the brief time I was observing classrooms.

Differentiated Instruction – What scaffolding/support for differentiated learning was observed?

(modeling, graphic organizers, visual supports, small group instruction, manipulatives, project based, extended time, etc.)

If students were physically seated in groups their assignments were not differentiated. Teachers were doing most of the talking. Some classrooms had a collaborating teacher. This teacher was mostly monitoring students.

Classroom Environment – Desk Configuration, Anchor Charts, Literacy/Numeracy Rich, etc.

The classroom environment were different in each classroom. In the primary grades, there was evidence that centers were established for learning. In grades 3-5 there were various classroom configurations to support collaborative learning.

Instructional Strategies Observed -

For the most part the students were polite and compliant with instructional demands. I did observe some student engagement strategies, however there were missed opportunities to increase the level of rigor.

Classroom Observation Summary

Strengths (I liked...)

- Students were aware of classroom routines
- Teachers were responsive to individual student needs
- Students were enthusiastic about learning
- Students were respectful and polite to all staff

• Expectations for work completion

Growth (I wonder...)

- How could teachers include more student to student discourse?
- Do teachers know how to effectively use learning targets to monitor student progress?
- Do teachers know how to effectively use data to drive instructional practices?
- What additional structures could be put in place to support an increase in the level of rigor when asking student questions?
- How student engagement could be improved so that all students had an opportunity to "show what they know?"
- Would teachers consider looking at classroom expectations differently?

The teachers were randomly selected for walk-throughs by the principal and me. The lesson plans are completed on a district provided template and do show the learning targets for each instructional period. This was very useful to determine consistent "look-fors" with limited time to stay in each classroom. The classroom environments varied from grade to grade and teacher to teacher. The room configuration supported collaborative groups; however I saw little evidence of student to student discourse. Even though the classrooms supported center activities; the students worked on assignments in a whole group format. All of the classrooms had the learning targets displayed in student friendly terms, but I did not observe teachers making reference to them during the walk-through process.

With this "snap-shot" observation process it is challenging to make determinations. Overall, there are very good structures in place for students to learn at high levels. I would recommend that the level of rigor is increased, differentiated instruction implemented with fidelity, and teachers increase their effective use of data to monitor student progress in mathematics and literacy.

Part 4

Performance Data

Student Learning Data

INDICATOR	CURRENT YEAR	PREVIOUS YEAR
% of Students Reading at Grade Level	20 % Proficient or Advanced	26 % Proficient or Advanced
State Test Results Reading/English/Writing (by grade level or course)	2.89 % Proficient or Advanced	2.4 % Proficient or Advanced

State Test Results Mathematics (by grade level or course)	4.5% Proficient or Advanced	2.9 % Proficient or Advanced
Gap Analysis State Assessment Results for Reading/English/Writing by Subgroups	NA	NA
Gap Analysis State Assessment Results for Mathematics by Subgroups	NA	NA
District/Benchmark/Interim Assessment Results	% Proficient or Advanced ELA 3 rd -1.9% 4 th -2.5 % 5 th - 4.8% Mathematics 3 rd -4.2 % 4 th -5 % 5 th -15 %	% Proficient or Advanced
Literacy Data (Lexile Levels, Fluency, or Other Measures School Wide)	2014-15- 56% -3rd graders Lexile within the stretch band based on Georgia Milestones 2014-15 -29% of 4th graders Lexile within the stretch band based on Georgia Milestones 2014-15 - 22% of 5th graders Lexile within the stretch band	
% of Student Failing Courses Reading/English/Writing by course or grade level	based on Georgia Milestones. % Course/grade failures Reading (# of Students Failing)-1st 9 Weeks report cards 1st -14 2nd -7 3rd -6 4th - 7 5th - 2	% Course/grade failures
% of Student Failing Courses in Mathematics by course or grade level	% Course/grade failures Math (# of Students Failing)-1st 9 Weeks report cards 1st - 11 2nd -3 3rd -1 4th -2 5th -9	% Course/grade failures
High School Graduation Rate	N/A	

Other Achievement Indicators (ACT, SAT,	N/A	
Work Keys, Course Recovery, Aspire, ELL		
Assessments, etc.)		

Documents Review

In addition to assessment results the needs assessment includes a review of pertinent documents. These may include but are not limited to school and team schedules, school improvement plans, leadership and collaborative team meeting agendas, meeting records, team norms, team SMART goals, common formative assessments, curriculum guides, pacing information, standards and learning targets, intervention schedules and learning plans, lesson plans, formative data, etc.

Documents Reviewed	
Georgia Milestones/School Improvement Plan	
AIMS Web plus	
Attendance Data	
Progress Monitoring Assessments	
Observational Data/Feedback	
School Digger	
Instructional Frameworks/Pacing Guides	
State Monitoring Plan	

Part 5

Major Findings in Examining Critical Practices and Guiding Principles for Continuous School Improvement

Culture of Success

At L.H. Williams Elementary School there is an expectation educators and leaders work in collaboration to improve student learning and there are many structures in place to support this process. The department of teaching and learning has provided an instructional framework for all content areas, as well as, many resources to support the PLC process. The teachers are utilizing the frameworks to support unpacking of the standards, developing learning targets, and creating common formative assessments. The academic coach (Ms. Houston) along with the principal,

monitor and maintain this process through collaborative planning meetings and classroom observations. Even though there are many structures in place, teachers do struggle with authentic collaborative learning, increasing the level of rigor, and quality differentiated instruction for struggling students.

The school has expectations for students and maximizes the welcoming feeling when you enter. Although not implemented with fidelity in all classrooms, there is a sense of planning for meeting the needs of all students with physical group structures. Teachers seem open to learning more to improve the outcomes for students.

Engaging in the Right Work

Professional Learning Communities

In a Professional Learning Community, teachers focus on three big ideas:

- 1) A focus on learning
- 2) A focus on learning for all in a collaborative culture
- 3) A focus on results

There is a schedule in place for collaborative planning time within grade level teams. The teachers are provided progress monitoring data from the district based on the results from a standard assessment that is developed from the instructional frameworks and pacing guides. Currently the teachers do use common assessments, typically administered weekly, to determine if students are meeting the learning targets.

1. What is it we expect students to know and be able to do?

Teachers must work together with authentic collaboration to determine the guaranteed and viable curriculum for each grade level. L.H. Williams Elementary School does have these standards broken down into learning targets; however these were not generated by the teachers (district provided). However, the teachers are following a common pacing guide and are developing their lesson plans collaboratively with support from the academic coach and administration.

2. How will we know when they have learned it?

Teachers do have tools to monitor progress; however the current data management system only reports progress typically every nine weeks. The common formative assessments are monitored individually and discussed during the PLC time. Formative assessments for learning are part of an ongoing process

to monitor each student's progress on a continuous basis and to inform the effectiveness of the core instruction.

3. How will we respond when they do not learn?

A multi-tiered system of interventions in a school-wide plan ensures that every student will receive additional time and support for learning as soon as they experience difficulty in acquiring essential knowledge and skills. L.H. Williams Elementary School does have time built in the master schedule for an intervention time, but varies from grade level to grade level. A need to improve this crucial support is needed to ensure that students are receiving supplemental and intensive support. Students that are not successful with core instruction could be more purposefully assigned to smaller group settings to assist struggling students in reaching grade level standards.

4. How will we respond when they do learn?

Extension opportunities are created for students who have reached proficiency with the guaranteed and viable curriculum. The use of common formative assessment data along with the district provided progress monitoring data could be utilized to identify these students.

Shifting From All to Each

Interventions

Currently there are dedicated intervention periods that vary throughout school day. The school also has EIP teachers that support students that are struggling in mathematics and literacy. Students are currently assigned as needing remediation according to the common formative assessments and progress monitoring data.

Remediation

Individual students that do not respond to instruction interventions are then referred to a problem solving team. The response to intervention (RtI) team meets weekly to determine intensive instruction needs of these students to support their overall success.

Leadership for Learning

The principal has developed many structures to ensure learning for all. She has made a lot of changes to guarantee that staff is matched to student and school needs. Dr. Griffin-Stewart not only supports the PLC process but ensures that time is set aside for teachers to engage in this process. She is typically able to take part in the collaborative planning process with most grade teams.

Engaging Students in Owning Their Learning

Students at L.H. Williams Elementary School do have celebrations for achievement and maintaining appropriate behavior as a collective group. There is little evidence of students monitoring their own learning and more work could be done to individualize this opportunity for each student.

Challenges and Creating First Steps

The following action items were derived in the closing meeting with the principal and the Solution Tree Coach.

Challenges

- Increasing the level of instructional rigor
- Implementing differentiated instruction based on common formative assessment results
- Increasing student engagement
- Increasing student learning in literacy skills across all grade levels
- Increasing student learning in mathematics skills across all grade levels
- Making connections between all of the state, district, and school initiatives to streamline
- Implementing the PLC process with fidelity school-wide
- Implementing a multi-tiered system for school-wide interventions and extensions to support all students meet and exceed grade level expectations

Action Steps

• Determine goals for each grade group team to support the school's mission and vision and align those goals with the school's Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

- Use the literacy and mathematics district frameworks and district pacing guide to create weekly common formative assessments
- Determine supplemental instructional interventions in literacy and mathematics to drive instructional planning (differentiated instruction)
- Revise and implement the dedicated intervention block to address the needs of all students
- Establish consensus on non-negotiables with staff to support a positive school culture and align with the district VIP vision
- Provide school based embedded professional development to support the above action steps in addition to the established coaching days (RtI, School Culture).

SMART Goals

For the 2016 – 2017 school year, L.H. Williams Elementary School will be working on meeting goals related to:

- 1) School Culture
- 2) Literacy
- 3) Mathematics

Each goal will support an increase in student achievement, proficiency, and student growth data as measured by quarterly progress monitoring (district tool)

Goal 1: The administration and/or leadership team will establish a culture of accountability to ensure all students will learn at high levels.

Goal 2: Teachers will understand and plan in authentic collaborative teams to develop weekly common formative assessments in ELA and Mathematics that support specific learning targets and monitor individual student progress.

Goal 3: Teachers will understand the importance of and deliver rigorous classroom lessons with increasing depth of knowledge levels to support all students learning at high levels.





30-60-90 Day Plan

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN FOR (NAME OF SCHOOL)

DATE: October 20, 2016

PRINCIPAL: Dr. Shandrina Griffin-Stewart

SOLUTION TREE COACH: Kimberly Rodriguez Cano

PRIORITIES BASED UPON NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Establish a culture of accountability

Develop weekly common formative assessments based on learning targets

Provide professional development on increasing rigor in classroom instruction

Smart Goals (30 day plan) Actions	 Goal 1: The administration and/or leadership team will establish a culture of accountability to ensure all students will learn at high levels. Establish consensus with all staff on non-negotiables Develop goals for each grade level team to respond to the individual needs of students Determine structures to monitor data on a more frequent (weekly) basis
Level of Implementation	Beginning
Expected Impact	 Increasing positive school culture of accountability Increasing student achievement and mastery of standards in literacy and mathematics
Evidence	Observation to address implementation fidelity, common formative assessments, and student achievement data
End Date	November 30, 2016
Person(s) Responsible	Leadership Team, Principal, Solution Tree Coach

Smart Goals

(60 day plan)	Goal 2: Teachers will understand and plan in authentic collaborative
	teams to develop weekly common formative assessments in ELA and
	Mathematics that support specific learning targets and monitor individual
	student progress.
	Goal 3: Teachers will understand the importance of and deliver
	rigorous classroom lessons with increasing depth of knowledge levels to
	support all students learning at high levels.
Actions	Goal 2:
	 Review the district provided instructional framework and pacing guide
	Determine learning targets (if not provided) in ELA and Mathematics
	 Create weekly common formative assessments Develop a monitoring plan
	Goal 3:
	 Provide professional development on depth of knowledge, engaging lessons, and classroom instructional strategies
	Revise current intervention/extension block to meet the needs of
	all students
Level of Implementation	Developing
Expected Impact	
	 Increasing student achievement and mastery of standards in literacy and mathematics
	incracy and mathematics
Evidence	Classroom observation data, common formative assessments, lesson plans,
	schedules, and agendas
End Date	I
	January 15, 2016
Person(s) Responsible	
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	Leadership Team, Principal, Solution Tree Coach

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Smart Goals (90 day plan)	Goal 2: Teachers will understand and plan in authentic collaborative teams to develop weekly common formative assessments in ELA and Mathematics that support specific learning targets and monitor individual student progress. Goal 3: Teachers will understand the importance of and deliver rigorous classroom lessons with increasing depth of knowledge levels to support all students learning at high levels.
Actions	 Goal 2: Review weekly common formative assessments data Continue to create weekly common formative assessments in literacy and mathematics Revise monitoring plan (if needed) Goal 3: Revise current intervention/extension block to meet the needs of all students Provide follow-up support for teachers
Level of Implementation Expected Impact	 Increasing student achievement and mastery of standards in literacy and mathematics Increase in lowest 25% student achievement data
Evidence	Classroom observation data, common formative assessments, lesson plans, schedules, and agendas
End Date	February 20, 2017
Person(s) Responsible	Leadership Team, Principal, Solution Tree Coach