



Grade 9 Focus Network

School Year 2026 - 2027

First offered during the 2022-23 school year, the Grade 9 Focus Network brings together schools from multiple districts and states to participate in a community of practice as partners work together to strengthen the conditions and capacities that support Grade 9 on-track achievement. Network membership includes a combination of individualized coaching, quarterly cross-school collaborative sessions, a monthly network newsletter and online resources portal, an annual school visit to one of our demonstration site schools, and our annual cross-network convening.

Coaching

Network Experiences

School Visit

Coaching

During coaching sessions throughout the year, a dedicated RISE coach collaborates with each school's Grade 9 leadership team to set and track progress toward goals, and reflect on the implementation of strategies and student outcome data. RISE coaches also conduct site visit observations of Grade 9 team meetings to provide feedback and support educator collaboration, a key lever for on-track achievement. Coaching will include, but is not limited to, the following focus areas:

- **Grade 9 Start-of-Year Diagnostic:** Using RISE's School on the RISE Framework and the corresponding Grade 9 "Actions to Consider," RISE will assess current systems, structures, and practices to identify areas for improvement.
- **School Goal-Setting for Priority Domains:** Coaching sessions will support high schools in setting a clear, prioritized goal for keeping students "on track" in Grade 9. Emphasis will be placed on developing strong data visibility practices to help educators use data effectively to drive student success.
- **Strategic Leadership and Grade 9 Team Structures:** Coaching will also focus on establishing or refining improvement team structures, identifying a dedicated leader to champion the work, and ensuring high-fidelity implementation.

Quarterly On-Track Data Visibility Reports - Once per quarter, partner schools will share with RISE an agreed-upon set of aggregated measures. RISE will use these data for program improvement, network learning, and provide participating schools with a school and a network overview of the data to capture bright spots and share benchmarks as a community.

To learn more, please contact RISE Deputy Director of Engagement, Peter Lorinser (plorinser@ctrise.org).

Network Experiences

Grade 9 Leadership Collaboratives - Participating schools engage in a learning community with other schools by having several members of their core Grade 9 leadership team (e.g., administrator, teacher leader(s), counselor) attend virtual cross-district sessions to continue building knowledge around Grade 9 success, to share and problem-solve challenges, and to support near-peer learning and collaboration rooted in RISE's Schools on the RISE framework.

RISE In Action: Virtual Learning Series - RISE offers virtual learning opportunities to all Network school partners to support educators who are leading or seeking to start specific on-track and postsecondary strategies (e.g., summer bridge, on-track student conferences). Through cross-district and cross-network collaboration, educators from various RISE partnerships will discuss resources, practices, and barriers across schools at different stages of implementation.

RISE Network Coaching E-Newsletter and Resources - To promote ongoing learning among network members, RISE circulates a monthly newsletter to educators from all participating schools that highlights promising best practices and provides timely resources for teams to make use of in advancing freshman success.

RISE Annual Convening - Each participating school receives up to four seats at the RISE Annual Convening. This one-day event brings together all school partners to focus on shared efforts in on-track and postsecondary work while sharing diverse perspectives and experiences. Join us to build relationships, develop innovative strategies, and drive meaningful change in our educational communities.

School Visit

Participating schools receive up to four seats at a visit to a RISE core network partner high school in Connecticut. Teams observe Grade 9 structures and practices, connect with and learn from fellow educators working on building freshman success, and reflect on implementation and strategy design in their own contexts in light of observations.