

A recent article in the School Library Journal discusses the importance of building awareness about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in schools and with the voting public. 46 states and Washington, DC have adopted the CCSS but less than 25% of the general public population know about the standards and why they are so important in preparing students for college and careers. More importantly, 72 % of teachers support the standards. Those who are not familiar with the standards and their goals are more likely to have negative impressions about them (Debra Lau Whelan, July 2012). Those "in the know" need to share the knowledge with others.

This report also suggests that it is critical to "sustain and even ramp up efforts to inform educators about the details of state implementation plans and what teachers can expect in terms of professional development, aligned instructional materials, and opportunities for cross-state collaboration."

This implementation step can be reinforced in many ways through instructional coaching. The timing couldn't be better. Instructional coaches are the catalyst to ensuring teacher collaboration, ongoing professional learning and building awareness about the standards and how to meet/exceed those standards. Coaches work with teachers to identify the individual teacher goals, reflect with the teachers, determine instructional goals, collect and analyze data, and to discuss instructional decisions that support the school wide goals for student growth. Starting the year with a process that fosters open communication helps teachers implement effective instructional practices in a non-evaluative way and encourages educators to be active participants in their own learning.

As we begin to set our schedules for the coming year, flexibility will be essential in working with teachers. Instructional coaches need to be flexible and may have a dual role: teaching in their own classrooms and providing one-on-one and/or small group coaching support. Coaches, however, are not the only ones who need to be flexible and provide scaffolding to colleagues. This is an opportunity for school librarians to support teachers in their buildings and bridge the gap between theory and practice. Through the IU system, many librarians are involved with PIIC and have identified ways to maintain ongoing professional learning in an interdisciplinary approach to instruction.

One of PIIC's core elements is using evidence-based literacy practices across the curriculum. Since reading is at the heart of the CCSS, librarians are poised to work with teachers in all content areas. They can surely help teachers make those connections and identify content

reading resources that meet the needs of their students. Sustaining professional learning opportunities and support will be vital to promoting learning on all levels. As one of the current Standards for Professional Learning states, "Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards." Librarians, coaches, and other teacher leaders can change the culture of a school, one conversation at a time — especially when the CCSS are at the center.