

The Role of Instructional Specialists



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“Accomplishing the maximum impact on student learning depends on teams of teachers working together, with excellent leaders or coaches, agreeing on worthwhile outcomes, setting high expectations, knowing the students’ starting and desired success in learning, seeking evidence continually about their impact on all students, modifying their teaching in light of this evaluation, and joining in the success of truly making a difference to student outcomes.”

-John Hattie, Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning

Instructional Specialists: Agents for Change

- Facilitate in-house professional learning and collaboration
- Acknowledge instructional expertise develops over time
- Target support based on individual teacher needs
- Build instructional capacity across grade levels and within teams
- Facilitate implementation of new curricula and instructional practices
- Maintain an eye toward consistency and alignment
- Support culture of continuous learning and improvement
- Align teaching and learning with District goals and objectives

Principles of Effective Professional Learning

- Duration of learning must be ongoing to address challenges that accompany implementation
- Implementation support is imperative for lasting change
- Differentiation is key to supporting range of teacher needs
- Demonstration of concepts and pedagogy facilitates change

Source: Teaching the Teachers: Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability (2009), Center for Public Education

Making a Difference in District 90

- Building strong, trusting relationships with teachers and teaching teams
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Responding to individual and group needs
- Offering targeted feedback that is non-judgmental and non-evaluative
- Collaborating and articulating across building and grade levels

Name	Role	Building
Kathleen Fleming	Instructional Specialist	Willard
Shanna Castillo	Technology Integration Specialist	Willard
Pam Moriarty	Instructional Specialist	Lincoln
Annmarie Clasky	Technology Integration Specialist	Lincoln
Jennifer Ankerberg	Instructional Specialist	Roosevelt
Nancy Mueller	Math Instructional Specialist	Roosevelt
Taneehsa Thomas	Technology Integration Specialist	Roosevelt

Instructional Specialist Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Purpose	Example
Resource Provider	To expand teachers' use of resources to improve instruction	Gathers information and / or resources
Data Coach	To ensure that student data is used to drive decisions	Works with individuals or groups to facilitate data conversations
Curriculum Specialist	To ensure implementation of the adopted curriculum	Supports teachers in unpacking curriculum
Instructional Specialist	To align instruction with curriculum to meet needs of all students	Coaches teachers on methodologies and best practice
Mentor	To increase novice teachers' skills and support induction	Works with novice teachers and at the induction level
Classroom Supporter	To increase quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction	Models, co-teaches, observes, conducts pre-and post-conferences
Learning Facilitator	To design collaborative, job-embedded, standards-based professional learning	Assists with coordinating and planning effective professional development

Measuring Instructional Specialist Effectiveness

- Develop SMART goals linked to building or department specific outcomes
- Monitor the percentage of program goals achieved
- Engage in goal setting specific to instructional specialist role
- Collaborate with teachers to target specific student skills and outcomes
- Develop goals with principal as part of evaluation process

Source: Killion, J. (2012) Coaching Matters, Oxford, OH: Learning Forward

Q & A