

## Coaching Teachers Benefits Our Students

Every day in every classroom throughout the district, our talented, dedicated teachers are working to ensure that students *graduate confident in their abilities to meet life's challenges and opportunities*. And every day, in every classroom across the district, our teachers are thinking about how they can do something better to help their students be successful learners.

These skills are not all learned in college and developed in isolation in the classroom. In fact, job-embedded professional development (teacher training) has the most profound impact on changing adult performance. Work with peers, supervisors, and experienced instructional coaches, all contribute to teacher growth.

Coaching is a form of professional development that brings out the best in people. Trained, experienced teacher leaders work side-by-side with teachers to examine student progress, plan instruction, give feedback on classroom observations, and reflect on new instructional practices.

At North Mason, instructional coaches at all levels have become a key feature of professional development. Our elementary coaches are Angela Mehling and Tina Effray. At the middle school, both Amber Nygard and Connie Hostak are half time coaches. They focus their time on providing training, assisting teachers to hone their craft, and supporting new curricular adoptions. They also observe teachers in classrooms so they can provide feedback, modeling and allow teachers to observe in other classrooms. Teachers have expressed their appreciation of the coaches' knowledge of staff and students, responsiveness, and leadership.

Brooke Quam serves as the district's Instructional Technology Coach. Brooke coached at the new high school last year and is broadening her support as the new middle school has opened, and also with the increase in technology available to teachers and students at the elementary schools.

Quam developed a student help desk at NMHS called S.W.A.T. (Students will Advance Technology). These students help staff trouble shoot their technology issues in the classroom. They also research and post instructional videos on educational applications that are available for staff on the North Mason District website.

Staff have benefited from the training that our in-district coaches have provided. One teacher responded after attending a training day, "I enjoyed the localized familiar professional development. It was relevant, useful, and encouraging. I love in-district training with the other elementary school. Working collaboratively makes it powerful. This type of professional development leads to more impact and changes in the classroom. It is wonderful to use the talent we have in our district to lead us to excellence."

Our NM coaches have received extensive training in various academic areas, and have increased their knowledge in best instructional practices. They are extremely dedicated to creating strong learning environments for students. They are able to see teaching in every classroom and be supportive to each teacher district-wide. The combination of providing training, in addition to observing and modeling in classroom has created an atmosphere of collaboration and trust. In this way, the district is able to support the growth of teachers and ultimately help our children be successful in school.

Special Guest Article by Lisa Roberts, Director of Instructional Services