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The transition to the Common Core will be a challenging one for students and teachers alike. As the new standards will demand that students become self-directed and critical readers, writers, and thinkers, teachers will also need to make shifts in their instructional practice. Any change requires reflection and support, and, therefore, coaches will have an important role in this transition process. It is critical for teachers to have high-quality professional learning experiences that help them understand the shifts in the Common Core State Standards from existing state standards and identify the necessary changes they will need to make in their own curriculum and instruction. Participation in professional learning coupled with instructional coaching will help support teachers in transferring new knowledge and skills to the classroom. Focusing on specific goals for student learning utilizing the CCSS will make a positive impact on student achievement and help to build capacity through the work and support of a coach and the PIIC model.

Here are some recommendations for coaches:

1. Become familiar with the Common Core and related documents yourself.
 - Understand the major shifts from the PA Academic Standards to the Common Core.
 - Explore the concepts of academic rigor and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK).
 - Examine the Common Core standards vertically to identify key differences from grade-to-grade.
 - Identify the cross-curricular implications of the Common Core State Standards.
 - Understand the Standards of Mathematical Practices and the implications for teaching and learning.
2. Introduce teachers to these concepts.
 - Ask your principal for a few minutes at a faculty meeting to introduce a new concept, such as text complexity, close reading, or text-dependent questions. Continue the discussion at future meetings.
 - Plan and facilitate a longer professional development session addressing one of the

concepts in more depth.

- Work with a grade-level team or department to do a “close reading” of their grade-level/content area standards, as well as the grade below and above, noting the key differences in each.
- Work with a grade-level team to unpack the CCSS to describe what the students will know, do, and understand.
- Create a district-wide centrally located Common Core training center for teachers.
- Develop a needs assessment to determine what the staff is strong in where more support is needed regarding the CCSS to help plan for professional development.
- Develop a professional development session on formative assessment with regards to the new standards focusing on the question, “How are we going to know that the students have learned the content?”

3. When working in the PIIC model, bring the Common Core into your coaching conversations.

- Have an electronic or hard copy of the standards with you when working with teachers in the BDA cycle.
- In the before or after phase, ask questions that encourage teachers to become more familiar with the standards.

1. What standards will be/were addressed in your lesson?
2. How will you/do you know if the students achieved the goals of the lesson?
3. What do/did the students already know about this topic/skill? How will this/did this determine the level of questions you will ask/asked in this lesson?

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