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Literacy coaches help boost reading skills

There's a new sort of coach these days in Albany's public schools and they aren't on the sports fields.

The district has established literacy coaches this year to help boost students' reading skills. All experienced educators, the coaches are supporting elementary teachers in the delivery of balanced instruction, providing professional development seminars for teachers, creating lessons, providing feedback to teachers and much more.

Linda Rudnick, the district's director of instruction, explained that literacy coaches "build relationships with teachers and provide support in enhancing their ability to teach reading and writing to children with confidence and ease."



The program was launched to support Harcourt's Storytown literacy program, introduced this fall after an extensive 18-month search for the premier literacy program in the field today.

The three new coaches – Anne Miller, Mary Rose Bates and Dawn Castle – each have worked at least 16 years in Albany's public schools and bring a wide range of skills and experience. Two part-time coaches, Barbara McKenna and Leslie Jimpson, are working primarily with kindergarten and pre-K teachers.

"We're looking to unravel the mystery of reaching all students," Mrs. Rudnick said. "We will build on their strengths and target their weaknesses so that the teaching becomes focused, customized and appropriate for each young learner, resulting in student literacy success at every grade level."