

## Building Capacity - One Step at a Time - Includes Support Staff Professional Learning

As we respond to growing attention to the science of self-regulation, we are working with schools and districts as they travel along the continuum from *initial awareness* to *engagement* to *responsibility*. No two jurisdictions are in the same place, but everyone is bringing energy and commitment to build an overall self-regulation plan. This is deep work, ensuring that what we know about self-regulation really does impact on what we do and how we organize for kids and adults to be successful. One of the most important (but sometimes overlooked) elements of a self-reg project initiative is to provide opportunities for support staff, in particular Education Assistants, to be included in professional growth sessions. Our EAs often have more regular and consistent interaction with kids who have the most challenges self-regulating. Their skilful work makes a tremendous difference to outcomes.

In Northern Alberta, the Northwest Regional Learning Consortium has made that commitment and we are pleased to be supporting their efforts in workshops this fall and winter. Here is part of their story:

***Project Background:*** *Over the past two years one of our rural school jurisdictions, Peace Wapiti School Division, has partnered with Northwest Regional Learning Centre to develop PD days for their Educational Assistants (about 150 staff) as part of a district initiative to support and encourage them in their professional roles. In the 2014-15 year, there are two days for Educational Assistants and Support Staff to access this supportive and ongoing professional learning. Foundational learning and understanding, strategies and in-class concepts, are planned which will support EA staff as they support teachers and students in classrooms. Members of the CSRI team are working with this group and have been very well received as we are all looking forward to self-regulation strategies.*

That is good system thinking, an aligned and coherent capacity building approach that uses adult learning time effectively and recognizes the essential role of Education Assistants and other Support Staff members.