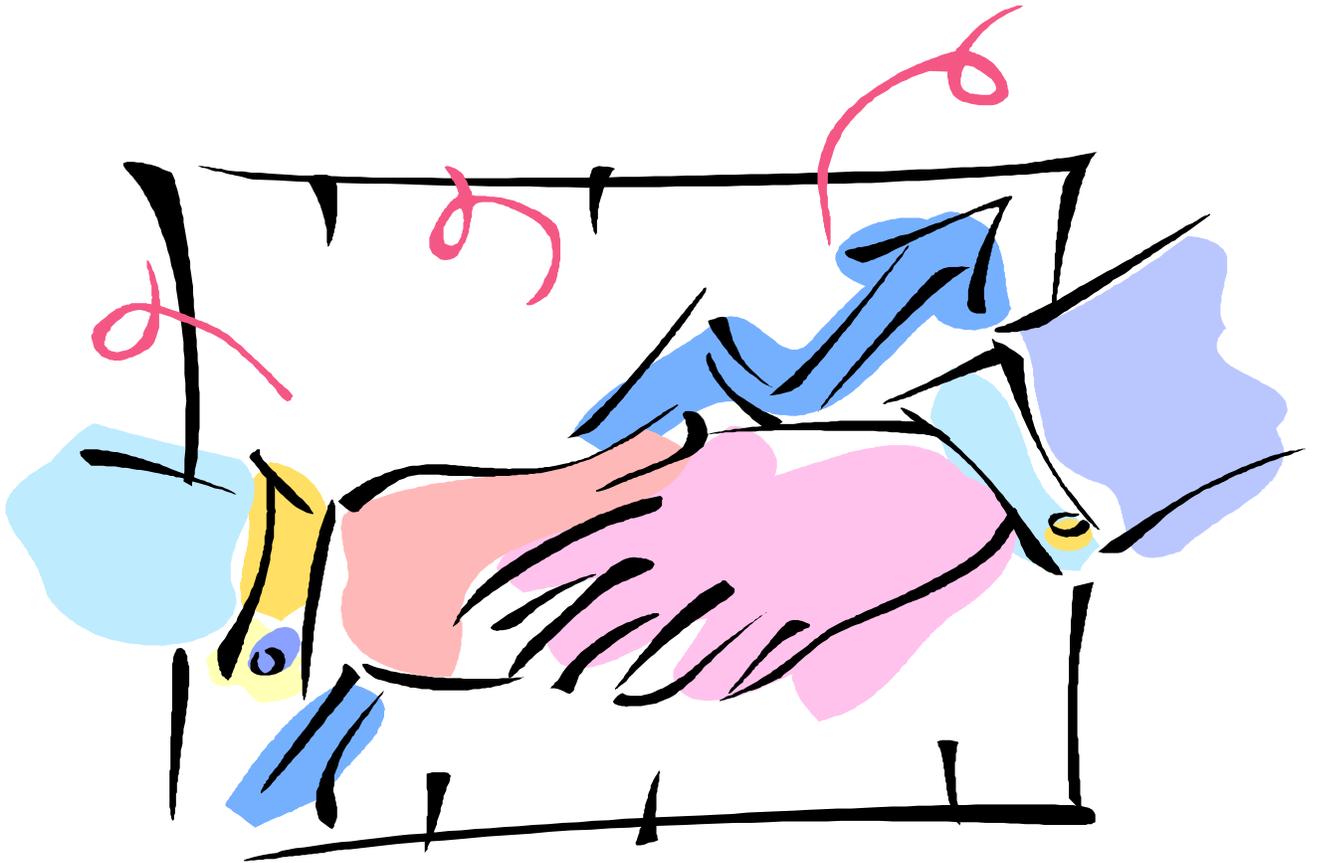


Plainfield Public Schools

A Mentor's Guide

Working with New Teachers



“Hand in hand, mentors and their new teacher partners are leading school communities in providing high quality and equitable instruction for all students.”

Ellen Moir and Janet Gless Quality Induction: An Investment in Teachers

Plainfield Public Schools Mentoring Program Overview

“... leaders are people who ‘walk ahead’, people genuinely committed to deep changes in themselves and in their organizations. They naturally influence others through their credibility, capability, and commitment.”

Peter Senge (The Dance of Change)

Mentors are selected to provide support to each provisionally certified teacher at each of the thirteen schools and early childhood centers. Mentors are focused on creating a climate of inquiry and targeted feedback. Mentors provide positive practical feedback and are encouraged to offer emotional support. The expectations are that they will meet with each individual novice teacher on a regular basis. Mentors will conduct classroom visitations and establish follow-up conference sessions. They offer observation feedback, supply tips and techniques on teaching, formulate curricula/lesson plan suggestions, offer classroom management strategies and conduct demonstration lessons. Mentors also help to provide psychosocial support, which research has shown to be as important as professional support. In addition, mentors are expected to attend training for their own development.

The mentor program holds as its foundation underpinning that teachers must be at the core of the leadership community with support from building administrations to affect effective learning communities and create lasting changes in school climate and improve student performances. Dennis Sparks, Executive Director of National Staff Development Council supports this philosophy when he states,

“teachers in these leadership communities will play various staff development roles: district and improvement committee members, mentors or new teachers, curriculum writers, and designers of new assessment processes. Teacher leaders will offer workshops to colleagues and be classroom coaches to support teachers’ continued growth. They will help peers plan lessons, critique student work, apply new instructional practices, and solve common problems of teaching.”

Plainfield’s mentor program has embarked upon a journey to create these teacher leaders in a systematic way.

Role and Responsibilities of Mentors

Mentors establish a relationship that encourages new teachers to ask questions. They facilitate conversations that are focused on the support needs of new teachers. Mentors provide positive, practical feedback and are willing to offer emotional support. They meet with individual novice teachers on a regular basis. Mentors conduct classroom visitation/demonstration lessons and establish pre and post conference sessions. Mentors are prepared to offer observation feedback, tips and techniques on teaching, curricula/lesson plan suggestions, classroom management strategies and demonstration lessons. Mentors provide psychosocial support, which research has shown to be as important as professional support. In addition, mentors attend training for their own development.

Each Mentor Will:

- ✓ Participate in on-going mentor training (12 hours / four times a year - 3 hour sessions Fall/Winter/Spring).
- ✓ Develop visitation and conference schedules so that each mentor will conduct will conduct weekly contacts. Weekly contacts consist of any or all of the following:
 - demonstration lessons - a minimum of 30 minutes or full period/block
 - classroom visitation - a minimum of 30 minutes
 - pre-conference – a minimum of 30 minutes
 - post-conference – a minimum of 30 minutes
- ✓ Complete and send in signed Monthly Mentoring Documentation Logs to the Supervisor of Teaching Induction and Mentoring.
- ✓ Utilize the district’s manual “Working With the New Teacher: A Mentor Guide” as a resource for problem solving and development of novice teachers.



“It is critical...that we think not only about what a new teacher needs to be successful but also what a mentor teacher needs to know and be able to do in order to support a new teacher.”

E. Moir and J. Gless, *Quality Induction: An Investment in Teachers*

Expectations for Mentors

Developing Productive and Supportive Relationships

- ❑ Get to know your new teachers on a personal level.
- ❑ Compliment progress and demonstrated understandings.
- ❑ Be aware of all ramifications of advice given to new teachers.
- ❑ Keep information that new teachers share *in confidence*.

Understanding Professional Standards and Student Content Standards

- ❑ Review and discuss professional standards for the teaching profession.
- ❑ Review and discuss New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and demonstrate how standards drive instruction.
- ❑ Review and discuss New Performance Standards and NJCCCS utilizing exemplars New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards, of student work that meet the standards in various content areas.
- ❑ Review the Evaluation System and how it is aligned with standards.

Using Formative Assessment Strategies

- ❑ Use collaborative logs to focus support.
- ❑ Use conferences to address needs of new teachers.
- ❑ Refer to rubrics for self-assessment and as a guide to improve professional practices.

Collecting and Analyzing Observation Data

- ❑ Pre-conference before visitations (new teacher visiting you and you visiting new teacher).
- ❑ Use appropriate reporting forms during observation.
- ❑ Debrief following a visitation as soon as possible. Plan debrief time at pre-conference.
- ❑ Discuss what you observed and listen to the new teacher's concerns about the visitation.

Using Student Work/Data to Guide Instruction

- ❑ Analyze student work together. Refer to standards and exemplars.
- ❑ Discuss next steps by planning instruction to meet student needs.

Developing a Community of Adult Learners

- ❑ Lead and participate in study groups.
- ❑ Build and sustain forums for meaningful discussions about professional practices and personal growth.
- ❑ Share research that reinforces successful practices

Building Leadership Capacity and Skills.

- ❑ Recognize strengths of new teachers and encourage them to share these with other staff members.
- ❑ Demonstrate your willingness to share your expertise and understanding with others on a consistent basis, and encourage others to do the same.

Facilitating Groups

- ❑ Provide opportunities for new teachers to manage meetings.
- ❑ Model effective facilitation skills.

Participating in Mentor Training and Update Sessions.

- ❑ Attend all required training and mentoring sessions.
- ❑ Network with other mentors.

Meeting with New Teachers Weekly.

- ❑ Use forms to document meetings.
- ❑ Effective use of time is essential.

“One of the most effective ways for a mentor to help a novice develop his or her teaching skills is to demonstrate a reflective approach to teaching, self evaluation, and implementation of new ideas.”

V. Denmark and I. Podesh, *The Mettle of a Mentor*

Mentor Selection Criteria

Criteria for Mentor/Coach Selection

- ✓ Has a minimum of three years teaching experience.
- ✓ Completion of application process including three recommendations.
- ✓ Demonstrates knowledge of and integrates New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards, NJCCCS and New Standards in course content.
- ✓ Demonstrates commitment to self-development i.e., graduate and district course, etc.
- ✓ Demonstrates proficiency in targeted grade level or content areas.
- ✓ Demonstrates problem solving skills and good inter-personal skills.
- ✓ Willingness to attend Mentor Institutes

Benefits of Mentoring

- ✓ Assisting new teachers as they focus their students on achievement of high academic standards.
- ✓ Receiving on going professional development to become a more reflective practitioner.
- ✓ Learning from other mentors and new teachers.
- ✓ Experiencing increased collaboration with administration and other staff members.
- ✓ Being instrumental in building a learning community that supports professional expertise and personal development.
- ✓ Increasing the understanding of professional standards and student content standards.
- ✓ Transferring the knowledge and skills of effective classroom practices
- ✓ Responding positively to the challenges of systematic change.

“Quality mentoring requires careful selection, training and ongoing support.

Mentors must be selected carefully.

*’E. Moir and J. Gless, **Quality Induction: An Investment in Teachers***