

LONGWOOD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MENTORING PLAN

PURPOSE:

The purpose of Longwood Central School District's New Teacher Mentoring Program is to support and encourage the professional development of new teachers in a way that will promote excellence in teaching.

The program is designed to improve instructional performance; orient the new teacher to the culture of the school, school system, and Longwood community; and promote norms of continuous learning and collaboration. The primary goal is to increase student achievement.

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING MENTORS:

Teachers with a minimum of five (5) years experience in their certification area may submit a formal application to be considered as a mentor for a new teacher (see Attachment A). The application must include the recommendation of the building principal or program director who must give approval for the application to move forward. A five-member selection committee will be comprised of one Assistant Superintendent, one administrator to be appointed by MIAA, and three representatives appointed by MITA. The committee shall review each application to select potential mentors.

Mentors shall be selected based upon consideration of the following criteria:

- minimum five (5) years of teaching experience in area of certification in Longwood
- strong interpersonal relationships
- mastery of pedagogical and content area skills
- evidence of superior teaching abilities and excellence in teaching
- demonstrated commitment to professional growth
- general knowledge of school and district policies and provisions of the MITA Contract

A personnel bulletin advertising the mentoring opportunity and inviting interested applicants will be distributed no later than June 1st of each school year with final selection of mentors being completed by the close of school. If no mentor is available who meets the above criteria, the Selection Committee will review other potential candidates to recommend a suitable match for the new teacher. Because of their role in the observation/evaluation process, administrators and department chairpersons are not eligible to participate as mentors.

The building principal and one building representative appointed by MITA will be responsible for assigning mentors to new teachers. In the event that an adjustment in the initial mentor-new teacher team becomes necessary, the issue will be addressed by the principal and building representative, who may appeal to the Selection Committee for guidance.

MENTOR PREPARATION:

The District will offer, and mentors must participate in, a mentor training program that will focus on:

- knowledge of adult learning theory and teacher development
- knowledge of beginning teacher needs
- development of conferencing skills and coaching techniques
- ability to engage new teachers in reflection on their teaching practices
- effective communication with parents and colleagues
- best practice in mentoring
- collecting and interpreting evidence of effective teaching

Additionally, mentors will meet as a group at least three (3) times each year during the school day as a means of additional support for one another and for further training.

ROLE OF THE MENTOR:

The mentor's role shall be to guide and support the new teacher in an advisory, non-evaluative capacity. Information obtained by the mentor in his/her work with the assigned teacher is confidential and shall not be made available to supervisors or used in the evaluation or discipline of the new teacher. In order for all interactions between the mentor and new teacher to be confidential, neither administrators nor department chairs will observe those interactions.

The role of the mentor shall not be construed as limiting or supplanting the authority of school administrators or supervisors to supervise or evaluate the performance of new teachers. New teachers shall be supervised and evaluated according to the terms of the MITA contract.

MENTORING ACTIVITIES:

The mentoring program will include activities designed to help the novice teacher transition from preparation to practice with the goal of developing and improving instructional skills in order to improve student performance. Such activities may include:

- joint lesson planning
- coaching and modeling
- classroom visitations and demonstration lessons
- parent/teacher conferences
- reflection activities and goal setting
- helping to assess teaching skills and identify specific competencies needing improvement
- curriculum development and understanding of learning standards
- orientation to the school/district culture
- assisting with a professional development plan and facilitating professional growth providing assistance with:
 - organizing and managing materials
 - maintaining a record-keeping system
 - personal and professional concerns
 - addressing different learning styles
 - identifying resource people
 - writing/interpreting I.E.P.s
- interpreting assessment data to modify instruction
- establishing effective classroom management strategies

TIME ALLOCATION:

Mentors shall participate in a mentor training program that will include meeting with new teachers at the summer New Teacher Orientation Program. The mentor training workshop will require approximately twelve (12) to fifteen (15) hours over two (2) days, including New Teacher Orientation. The two day training will be scheduled late in August (typically during the last full week prior to the opening of school). Mentors shall be compensated for participating in the training program at the contractual rate for adult education to be paid upon completion of training.

During the school year, the mentor and new teacher shall meet for one (1) hour each week for a total of forty (40) hours outside the regular school day. Mentors shall receive an additional stipend representing forty (40) hours at the contractual rate for adult education for serving as a mentor. The compensation for mentors working with a new teacher for less than a full year shall be pro-rated to the number of weeks of mentoring. New teachers shall receive three in-service credits for their participation in the mentoring program.

Both the mentor and new teacher will be released from instruction for a forty (40) minute period each week during instructional weeks that are four (4) or five (5) days long. The release time is intended to provide an opportunity for mentoring activities that cannot take place outside the school day, for example, class visitations, demonstration lessons, and attendance at workshops or conferences. All release periods will be coordinated through the building principal.

DOCUMENTATION:

Each new teacher will be required to maintain a journal (see Attachment B) documenting all mentoring activities. The journal must include: the new teacher's name and certificate number; the mentor's name and certificate number; dates, times, and total hours of mentoring activities; type of mentoring activity. Per regulations, the District will maintain documentation of mentoring activities for a period of seven years.

PROGRAM EVALUATION:

An annual evaluation of the Mentoring Program shall be conducted for the purpose of improving the program. Each mentor and new teacher will complete an evaluation form that will be reviewed by the Professional Development Committee to make any necessary modifications to the Mentoring Plan.