NYS Program Guidance and Standards for Mentoring
2022

The purpose of NYS Program Guidance and Standards for Mentoring is to offer program guidance and a set of standards to build a system of supports to retain and help new educators thrive in their local context and the profession.

Mentoring is a crucial component of the induction of all educators into the profession and their new position. In New York State, mentoring is required for individuals seeking teacher or leader professional certification in public schools, BOCES, and special act school districts. Mentoring helps new teachers make necessary connections between educational theory and practice and supports their professional and personal growth. For the mentor teacher, mentoring enables professional development/learning opportunities and connections with colleagues. These opportunities establish a relationship where the new teacher is connected and supported within their local organization.

This document provides entities such as schools, school districts, and BOCES, as well as mentors and mentees a resource to navigate a pathway to develop, refine, and/or implement a robust and successful mentoring program.

Research shows that mentored teachers are more likely to become proficient in instructional techniques and remain in the profession (Gordon, 2020; Hanita et al., 2020). Mentoring programs increase job satisfaction and help teachers to emerge as leaders within their schools and have a positive effect on student achievement and engagement (Callahan, 2016). When schools implement mentoring programs effectively, the sharing of knowledge between teachers becomes an inherent practice whereby students, teachers, and the school climate benefits (Callahan, 2016; Sparks et al., 2017).

Mentoring Program Guidance

Program Intent and Entity Responsibilities. The [Professional Learning Plan](#) shall describe how the entities will provide a mentoring program for teachers and leaders who are required to participate for New York professional certification.

The Professional Learning Plan, which encompasses the mentoring plan, must be developed through collaboration with a professional learning team and be consistent with collective bargaining agreements. The team members shall be approved by the local board of education or the New York City Chancellor or their designee. A majority of the members shall be teachers appointed by the collective bargaining unit.

Regulations allow for an array of configurations that entities might employ to ensure that there is adequate opportunity for mentoring activities to take place. In New York State, there must be a defined time when mentoring services will occur for new teachers. However, there is latitude in how this time shall be provided, including but not limited to: release from instructional time, release from duties, the use of superintendent conference days, and summer orientation.

New York State guidance recommends that individual schools build in release time for both mentor and mentee to meet within the workday, and/or offer compensation for both mentor and mentee to meet outside of the workday. The program structure should include opportunities for mentors and mentees to conduct intervisitations of one another's classrooms. School districts may find a way to count mentorship as part of the state Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) requirements for both mentors and/or mentees.

- Philosophy and purpose
    - o The purpose and goals of the program are guided by a sound, well articulated philosophy, grounded in research and effective practice.
    - o The purpose of the mentoring program is to facilitate the transition of the new teacher from success in preparation programs into effective professional practice.
    - o A comprehensive mentoring program provides support for the new teacher and is intended to sustain a vibrant teaching career.

- Program design
    - o The mentoring program is designed to facilitate the selection and preparation of quality mentors, define the mentoring relationship, and support program evaluation and improvement.
    - o The program incorporates a purposeful, logically-sequenced structure of professional learning that is comprehensive, coherent, and sustained.
    - o The design is consistent with state standards for teaching and learning and supports the mission and vision of the entity employing the new teacher.

- Program implementation
    - Implementation aligns with the Mentoring Standards outlined in this document and reflects effective induction practices.
    - The program establishes a comprehensive infrastructure of resources to support new teachers.

Selection and Matching Process. The process for selecting mentors should be inclusive of multiple stakeholder groups and may include nomination, application and/or interviews. Considerations for matching mentors and mentees may include content or certification area, grade level, building assignment, needs of the mentee, and participant requests. The required process for evaluating mentor performance should inform the continuation of relationships and future selection and matching.
- The selection process identifies mentor candidates who are certified teachers with the qualities and dispositions of an effective mentor, according to the Mentor Standards outlined in this document.
- The mentor selection process is aligned with the needs of both the new teacher and the employing entity.The mentor selection process and criteria should be well defined and transparent.

Mentor Training. The entities shall provide mentors with information on requirements, forms, processes, and expectations. Training should be standards-aligned, research-based, and reflective of best practices. Sources may be district-based or from BOCES, Teacher Centers, institutions of higher education, and vendors. The preparation of the mentor should include theory of adult learning, theory of teacher or school building leader development, the elements of a mentoring relationship, peer coaching techniques, and time management methodology.
- Initial preparation provides the foundation for mentors as they begin their mentoring assignments, and ongoing development deepens mentors' skillfulness, knowledge, and effectiveness at providing instructional support for the new teacher.
- Mentor development provides for systematic application, practice, and follow-up that result in professional growth for the mentor and new teacher. The design of mentor development programs is informed by best practices of professional development.

Roles and Responsibilities. The entities shall clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the mentoring program and its participants. In addition to mentors and mentees, roles may include coordinator, administrators, and advisory board/steering committee. Responsibilities associated with these roles may include program implementation, oversight, monitoring, and support.

- Shared leadership and administration
    - The mentoring program's vision, goals, and action plans align with the entity's Professional Learning Plan.

- o Administrative processes support both beginning teachers and mentors.

- Mentee expectations
  - o The mentee actively engages in the mentoring process.
  - o The mentee displays a readiness to continue learning about teaching, and invites collaborative support and guidance.

Timelines and Record Keeping. Orientation, the initial phase of the induction process, is an opportunity to launch mentoring activities which last at least one school year. The plan must include procedures for the maintenance of documentation. As a best practice, both the mentor and mentee should maintain documentation of the successful completion of mentoring activities and clock hours to submit to the entity for verification, submission, and record keeping. The entity is responsible for ensuring all participants follow the regulations and meet the requirements.

Program Evaluation. The entities will establish measurable criteria for mentoring program evaluation prior to implementation. Entities should conduct data analysis through means such as needs assessments and program evaluations. The entities should use the data as a means of assessing the effectiveness of the program and to inform revisions.
- The program evaluation is standards-aligned.
- Evaluation provides feedback for program improvement.

Mentor Standards

1. **Qualities and Dispositions of an Effective Mentor**. An effective mentor's role is to onboard, engage, inspire, assist, encourage and advance the professional learning of a new teacher. The mentor as a teacher/leader serves as a model of professional conduct and exemplifies excellence in teaching.

1.1 - Committed to the professional learning of all mentees.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors are active members of learning communities who may be formal or informal leaders amongst their peers.
   b) Mentors facilitate the onboarding and address the ongoing needs of their mentees through collaboration with administration and the mentee. This onboarding may include support with classroom scheduling, obtaining classroom materials, understanding their rights and responsibilities, and establishing collegial relationships with all stakeholders.

1.2. Committed to their own professional learning as a reflective educator and an active participant in the profession.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors apply current research-based strategies to their content and curriculum.
   b) Mentors keep current on adult learning theory to support mentor/mentee interactions.
   c) Mentors engage in collaborative partnerships to improve practice.
   d) Mentors are members of professional organizations.
   e) Mentors review evidence to evaluate their effectiveness as a mentor and use this evidence to modify their approach as needed.
   f) Mentors seek professional learning to gain knowledge and skills needed to meet these Mentor Standards.

1.3. Connected to and aware of the educational landscape beyond the classroom.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors engage with the broader school/educational community.
   b) Mentors stay current on changes to education law and practice, school and district policies, and local union agreements.
   c) Mentors work collaboratively to contribute to a positive school culture.

1.4. Possess effective interpersonal skills and commit to creating an inclusive environment.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors recognize and respect differences.
   b) Mentors form professional, trusting relationships.
   c) Mentors use a variety of communication and conflict resolution strategies.
   d) Mentors understand social emotional needs and supports of adults.

1.5. Understand how to connect with people across differences in background, generations, experiences, cultures, etc.

Performance Indicators:
  a) Mentors value diversity as a strength and seek to support a diverse community of teachers and learners.
  b) Mentors understand and engage in culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.
  c) Mentors engage in critical reflection to identify and interrupt bias in personal and institutional interactions.
  d) Mentors support mentees in developing strong relationships with students, families, peers, and the community.

2. Professional Practice. As accomplished and respected educators, mentors draw upon professional teaching standards and appropriate content area standards to focus support on instructional growth and help mentees develop and improve their practice.

2.1. Support mentees in developing their practice.

Performance Indicators:
  a) Mentors collaborate with mentees to develop goals for the duration of the mentorship.
  b) Mentors support mentees in developing their use of a variety of instructional and assessment strategies to foster supportive, equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students.
  c) Mentors model how to develop awareness and support of the social and emotional needs of students.
  d) Mentors demonstrate and articulate their use of subject knowledge, content standards, and assessments.
  e) Mentors know and articulate state teaching standards and the teacher evaluation process.
  f) Mentors demonstrate and articulate the use of multiple forms of evidence, research, and data to inform their decision making.
  g) Mentors support mentees to continually review, reflect on and revise instructional practice.

2.2. Connect mentees to other expertise and resources.

Performance Indicators:
  a) Mentors support mentees in understanding and accessing school/district and community resources including mental health and safety.
  b) Mentors support mentees in navigating school/district/state policies and procedures.
  c) Mentors provide opportunities for the mentee to establish relationships across the school, the district, and the community.
  d) Mentors orient mentees to the district and building systems, resources, and operations. Examples: supplies, forms, procedures, sub requests, IT, etc.

e) Mentors acquaint mentees with their rights and responsibilities included in the collective bargaining agreement and share the structure of their local union leadership.

3. **Knowledge of Mentee**. Mentors recognize that mentees bring valued knowledge, skills and dispositions to their classrooms, schools, and districts. They use this knowledge to support their mentees.

3.1. Know and understand the needs of mentees, including beginning educators and veteran educators new to a position.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors welcome their mentees into the school community.
   b) Mentors use the prior learning and experiences of their mentees to inform their mentoring practice.
   c) Mentors understand the needs of mentees at various stages of induction.

3.2 Assess and responds to mentee's needs.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors use informal and formal strategies to assess the needs of mentees such as discussions, surveys, and observations.
   b) Mentors provide requested support, anticipate mentees' needs, and address them in a timely manner.

4. **Knowledge and Skills of Mentoring in Practice**. Mentors must be familiar with policies, processes, and procedures that support the development of their mentees. These include, but are not limited to, familiarity with research-based and best practices of mentoring, adult learning theory, and technology.

4.1 Understand and communicate the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors understand and communicate which persons fulfill which roles within the structure and hierarchy of their entity.
   b) Mentors understand and communicate to what extent the mentor-mentee relationship is confidential or evaluative.
   c) Mentors consider the locally negotiated contractual language when communicating responsibilities to mentees.

4.2 Initiate visitations, observations, meetings, and other supports as required.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors, in consultation with mentees, develop a regular schedule of visitations, observations, meetings, and documentation responsibilities.
   b) Mentors set clear purposes and expectations.
   c) Mentors and mentees reflect regularly on the individual progress towards previously established goals and make modifications when necessary.

4.3 Provide support through constructive feedback and recommendations regarding their mentees' instructional practice.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors create safe environments and build trusting relationships that promote the sharing of constructive feedback.
   b) Mentors use questioning techniques that encourage the mentee to think critically and reflect on their practice.
   c) Mentors provide timely and meaningful feedback.
   d) Mentors collaborate with mentees to discuss feedback and develop actionable next steps towards the mentee's goals.

4.4 Identify and implement strategies to support the success and retention of mentees.
Performance Indicators:
   a) Mentors promote positive strategies for a successful teaching career such as lifelong learning, self-care, and time management.
   b) Mentors encourage and model collegial, non-judgmental conversations surrounding teaching practice in a safe and professional environment.
   c) Mentors support mentees engaging in innovative and courageous teaching.
   d) Mentors guide mentees in developing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between teacher and students and their families.

Supporting Research and References for Mentoring

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