A Better Beginning
Helping new teachers survive and thrive

A guide for NEA local affiliates interested in creating new teacher support systems

A publication of the NEA New Teacher Support Initiative

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About This Guide

This publication was developed jointly by the NEA Office of Teacher Quality Initiatives, NEA Communications, NEA Publishing, and NEA Teaching and Learning, as part of NEA’s New Teacher Support Initiative.

For more information about this initiative — including the comprehensive reference, Helping New Teachers Succeed: NEA’s New Teacher Support Initiative (Mentoring New Teachers) — please contact Marilyn Schieff or Timothy Crawford in NEA Teaching and Learning, 202/822-7350, or Chuck Williams, the director for teacher quality initiatives, at 202/822-7703. This reference features more detailed guides for operating a new teacher mentor program.

A Better Beginning will help your NEA local affiliate set up a new teacher support system. In these pages are insights into the challenges new teachers face today, characteristics of an effective new teacher support system, and real examples of what works. The guide has a handy tool kit with sample surveys, contract language, and much more.
Preface

In the decade ahead, America’s public schools are going to need to recruit more than 2 million new teachers. Why? The children of baby boomers are swelling school populations to all-time highs at the same time teachers are retiring in record numbers.

Recruiting all the new teachers needed will be a challenging task. Retaining these new teachers will be equally challenging, because only about 50 percent of new teachers today are choosing to stay in the profession beyond five years.

What is NEA doing to help? NEA is working with a number of organizations, including the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future and Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., to heighten the awareness of the problem, to get communities thinking about solutions for the teacher shortage, and to mobilize members and allies to create recruitment programs and incentives for new teachers. One incentive that research has shown works to recruit and retain teachers is an effective teacher mentoring program.

This guide focuses primarily on teacher mentoring, and we hope you come away with an understanding of the potential power of mentoring programs.

Whether you’re looking for basic information about mentoring, beginning to think about implementing a mentoring program, or already embarked on such a program and eager to compare notes with your colleagues, this guide can help.

Introduction

Back in 1987, Arizona teacher Kathy Wiebke remembers, new teachers were left on their own as they greeted the incoming Class of 2000.

“It was: ‘Here’s the key to your room, here’s the Xerox machine, here’s the books. Now go at it,’” recalls Kathy Wiebke, who works in Paradise Valley.

Wiebke’s colleague Ellen James, a new teacher that year, was assigned to a portable classroom on the outskirts of campus. Though her colleagues were a “great resource, very supportive,” James describes her first-year experiences as terribly isolating.

“It was a whole lot of learning from mistakes,” she says.

Bridgeport, Connecticut teacher Mary Lou Weiner agrees. She still gets butterflies when she recalls her first year of teaching 20 years ago.

VOICES: “Five years from now, I probably won’t know any of the teachers at my school — there are that many people leaving. The new, young teachers aren’t like me. They won’t stay in one school or one district for 30 years. If they’re unhappy, they might change districts, but research is telling us they’ll probably just leave the profession and do something else with their lives. I care too much about our profession, children, and this country’s future to just stand by and let this happen.”

—Joan Kasle, Birmingham (Michigan) Education Association president
VOICES: “Colleges need to have a Reality 101 course, something that would give new teachers a clue about all the social problems we will be confronted with. The most surprising thing has been the kind of dysfunctional backgrounds so many of the students come from.”

— Mike Webster, a math and computer teacher in Troy, Michigan, in his first year.

“There was no support,” says Weiner. “It was just me and 36 fifth graders. The one in the last seat, near the cast iron heater, had a mustache.”

It’s not that other teachers weren’t friendly. There simply was no system in place for Weiner to share, vent, or cut through that feeling of isolation in her classroom.

Most new teachers today still feel isolated. And whether they stay in the profession for the long haul depends a great deal on their ability to “sink or swim” during their vital first year. Fortunately, several factors are pushing an alternative to sink-or-swim induction.

First, classrooms, schools, and communities have all changed. Teaching, driven by new information technologies and the challenge of adapting instruction to the needs and learning styles of students from widely diverse backgrounds, has become incredibly more complex. Parents, meanwhile, have higher expectations, and those expectations are matched by increasing demands from business, media, and political leaders.

There’s also an urgent need to hire — and retain in the profession — more teachers. By 2007, the United States will need 2 million new teachers. The ongoing effort to reduce class sizes is also forcing school communities to think far more seriously about the importance of attracting and keeping caring and committed teachers.

Recent studies have found that interest in teaching among college freshmen is now matching the all-time highs experienced in the early 1970s. Many states are working to reinforce this trend, by offering incentives to attract new teachers. But one pressing question remains: What will we do to keep new teachers once we get them?

**Stopping the Revolving Door**

More than half of new teachers currently leave the profession within five years. Among the many reasons: little on-the-job support. New teachers often get the most challenging assignments. They enter school systems with a dream-like vision, only to come face-to-face with harsh, unexpected realities.

But not all school districts leave new teachers isolated and inadequately supported. Some districts are actively nurturing and mentoring new teachers. A recent U.S. Department of Education study found that new teachers who participate in new teacher induction programs are nearly twice as likely to stay in the profession as those who don’t.

As members of the teaching profession, we shape the lives of students who pass through our classrooms. But we also shape the profession itself — its culture, its knowledge base, its standards for practice, and even its future.
We can best impact that future, in all sorts of positive ways, by nurturing new educators. With intensive support, studies tell us, new teachers consistently demonstrate higher levels of professional competence, greater success in working with children, and increased job satisfaction.

Research has also demonstrated what common sense has told us all along: that a critical predictor of student success is teacher quality.

A Tennessee study has found that students who had good teachers three years in a row scored significantly higher on state tests and made far greater gains in achievement than students with a series of ineffective teachers.

Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University has found that the strongest predictor of student performance on national assessments is the state’s percentage of well-qualified teachers — educators who are fully certified, with majors in the subjects they teach.

A qualified teacher in every classroom — a teacher who is licensed and teaching in field — is an essential prerequisite for increasing student achievement. By helping new teachers become experienced, by giving them support and encouragement, we significantly enhance teacher quality, teacher retention, and, ultimately, student success.

**How and Why the Association Can Help**

Our Association is at a crossroads. We can either stand by and let others get their hands into our profession or take control of the situation ourselves. With 2.5 million members — most of whom were once new teachers — our Association is ideally suited to help the profession become stronger.

All across America, new teachers are actively seeking support. They can find some support on the Internet and other support from informal get-togethers with other new teachers. But what new teachers really want is help from their more veteran colleagues.

“When we help our new teachers be the very best, we’re showing the public that we have high standards,” says Erma LaPierre, a veteran teacher in Massachusetts involved in the Weymouth Teachers Association mentoring program. “Many of us are slated to retire within the next 10 years. Without a new teacher induction program, the things we’ve all learned and done will just leave with us.”

Chris Guinther, an NEA member active in Missouri’s Francis Howell School District, agrees: “Establishing new teacher support is our way of continuing excellence in our profession. When new teachers see our members associated with that excellence, they want to be a part of our organization. That makes for a stronger union, a stronger voice for teachers, and improved education for our students.”

**Just the Facts: Why We Need To Help New Teachers Succeed**

- By the end of this decade, the U.S. will need 2 million new teachers.
- Currently, more than half of new teachers leave the profession in their first five years.
- New teachers who participate in induction programs are nearly twice as likely to stay in the profession as those who don’t.
- Research proves that a critical predictor of student success is teacher quality.
The New Teacher

Jennifer Gartell was elated when she accepted her first teaching job at Loma Linda Elementary School in Phoenix. It didn’t matter that she was hired only a week before school began, or that she had to spend nearly $300 of her own money on classroom supplies to get her classroom ready for the year — she was just eager to make a difference with students. But within a month, Gartell was ready to quit.

“I was totally stressed and the kids knew it,” she says. As a new teacher, Gartell was beginning to realize that she lacked an adequate repertoire of teaching strategies. Her new colleagues were friendly, but few had time to help her.

By the end of the first year, Jennifer’s class was “totally out of control.” Instead of spending her summer months preparing for her next group of kids, she quit the profession altogether — feeling disillusioned and tired.

Jennifer’s story is not a new one — in fact, it’s just one of the thousands behind the staggering teacher attrition rate in the United States today. Education Week suggests that the most talented new educators are often the most likely to leave. In teaching today, the first-year teacher is typically assigned to the same tasks, in and out of the classroom, as a long-time veteran. Novice teachers will sometimes meet the challenge — usually in schools committed to helping new teachers.

But supportive schools tend to be the exception, not the rule. Too many teachers start their careers in environments where closed classroom doors, not open collaboration, set the tone.

“Schools must transform into institutions that nurture new teachers and their students, that sustain teachers and the teaching profession,” notes Ellen Moir of the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

For beginning teachers, it’s no longer about taking the first job that comes along. It’s about taking the first job where they feel like they can survive — and eventually thrive.

Who Are Today’s New Teachers?

Twenty years ago, Jennifer was your “typical” new teacher: fresh out of education school and eager to make a difference. Today, not all first-year teachers follow that pattern. All new teachers are, naturally, new to the profession, but many are hardly new to the world of work. Some come from successful careers in business, law, or the military. Others are former stay-at-home moms whose kids are now older.

What discourages new teachers?

- Discipline problems
- Unending paperwork
- Unmotivated students
- Public and student disrespect for teachers and learning
- Lack of instructional material
- Late hiring
- Changes in their teaching assignment
- Placement in a field outside their certification
- Lack of familiarity with the types of students they are teaching
- Low pay
- Unsafe schools
- Bureaucratic “red-tape”

Most new teachers do preservice preparation programs in college. Others get “emergency” or “provisional” licenses. In Los Angeles alone, three out of four teachers hired this year did not have certification.

According to Market Data Retrieval’s Public Education Profile, one in every five teachers this year is new to the job. Of these, almost two-thirds were born after 1973. These new teachers can barely remember life before computers.

Research tells us that novices are more likely than their veteran colleagues to speak a second language, to be single, in debt and financially struggling, to have technology skills, and to have little understanding of or trust in unions.

These new teachers are also more likely to be concerned about parental involvement, know about multicultural issues, and get assigned to tough classes they may not be ready to teach. Like most who enter the profession, they are idealistic and enthusiastic. Upon entering the profession, 93 percent feel all children can learn. After one year in the public school system, 88 percent still feel that way.

What Do New Teachers Need?
At a recent first-year teacher conference hosted by the Connecticut Education Association, new teachers were asked: “How do you think CEA, as a teacher’s union, can help enrich your career or the teaching profession?”

The overwhelming response: Help us!

“CEA,” noted Lauren Weihl, one new Connecticut teacher, “can give me support and guidance on important issues and help me with my needs as a teacher.”

All across the country, new teachers are echoing this message.

“I need help with classroom management issues and lesson plans. I want help in figuring out what I need to do to meet state standards and keep my certification current. And I want professional development opportunities,” says James Engels, a first-year teacher in Phoenix. “If the Association can help me with these things, then I’ll see value in my membership. In return, I’ll want to become active and involved.”

A Changing of the Guard
Unions are, for many beginning teachers, an unfamiliar — and even unfriendly — concept.

Who are the new teachers?
- Almost two-thirds are younger than 27.
- More than a quarter are not fully certified.
- Nearly half — 42 percent — have just finished college and have never taught.
- 34 percent are former teachers who are coming back to the profession.
- The majority are single and in debt.

Statistics from “Beginning Now . . . Resources for Organizers of Beginning Teachers, 1999”
"A lot of new teachers don’t understand the union," says Pam Lillie, a second-year teacher in Armada, Michigan. “So they don’t get involved.”

Many new teachers, adds fellow young teacher Stephanie Holt, fall for the teacher union “stereotype” that appears so often in the media.

“A lot of new teachers think the union is a bad thing or that they’ll be considered a troublemaker if they call the union,” says this Grand Rapids, Michigan teacher. “More than anything, new teachers need to know that the union is there to give them a voice and that our opinions really do count.”

When veterans take the time and energy to reach out to new teachers and close the gap, everyone benefits.

“I think new teachers are more accepting of people than we give them credit for,” says 29-year veteran Judy Romzek, a mentor to Pam Lillie. “We have to reach out to them because we need them to pick up where we leave off.”

Consider the dynamic between Lillie and Romzek. The younger teacher says Romzek put a friendly face on the union and encouraged her participation. The result? Lillie now chairs her local Association Political Action Committee.

“I didn’t see myself as political,” she says. “But then, when I thought about it, I thought I can do this.”

Like many new teachers, Lillie struggles to be heard and to be taken seriously by older colleagues, administrators, and even parents. But the Association is helping her find her voice:

“I don’t want to be one of those people who complains all the time but doesn’t do anything to change things,” she points out. “I see now that being involved in the Association is a way to be heard.”

Because veteran Romzek took the time to get to know Lillie and her interests, tutored her on the Association’s history, and offered her a way to share her views and concerns with others, Lillie is now convinced of the Association’s value.

“Next, I think I want to be on the bargaining committee,” Lillie says.

With that, Judy Romzek rests easy, knowing that her Association will be in capable hands for many years to come.
Building an Effective New Teacher Support System

By establishing new teacher support systems that welcome newcomers to the profession and help them succeed, we can help reverse the alarming tide of teachers who leave the profession in their first five years — and, simultaneously, raise student achievement.

NEA, working with state and local affiliate leaders, has identified characteristics that make for an effective new teacher support system. As you work with your school district to create your own new teacher program, keep these characteristics in mind. An effective new teacher support system is:

▶ Designed, established, and funded at the district level.
Board of education policy, contracts, and other elements of the program are designed, recognized, and funded at the school district level and supported by state and federal policy and resources.

▶ Overseen by a committee.
A committee jointly appointed by the district administration and Association designs, implements, and oversees the program. Administrators and Association leaders work in cooperation to support the program.

▶ Available to all new teachers.
Support is given to all new teachers, especially to those in their first two years in the profession and the state. Some districts choose to extend support into the third year and beyond.

▶ Mentor-based.
Every new teacher — whether new to the profession, to the state, or to the school district — has access to an experienced teacher mentor who is capable of providing professional support, instruction, and guidance.

▶ Introduced with a new teacher orientation.
All new teachers partake in an orientation before the school year begins to meet mentors, other new teachers, administrators, and learn about the culture of the school, the school district, and the community.

▶ Mindful of new teacher assignments.
New teachers are assigned to teaching situations that are comparatively less challenging with class size, disruptive students, and student skills. They also receive little or no adjunct duties or special activity assignments.

▶ Supportive of collaborative learning.
New teachers are given opportunities to become more skilled in their jobs by collaborating with peers. They are able to observe best practice techniques for assessing students, managing classrooms, involving parents, and using student portfolios and student workgroups. They also have time to work with counselors, reading specialists, media specialists, social workers, and other school staff.

What will help new teachers succeed?

- Administrative support
- Adequate resources
- Collaboration and cooperative teaching
- Professional development
- Peer mentoring
- Instructional techniques and management routines
- Knowledge of what to expect
- Teacher autonomy
- Participation in decision making
- Performance feedback
- Emotional support
- Observing other teachers teach
- Discussing their teaching with others
- Handbooks with key information

Statistics from “Beginning Now: Resources for Organizers of Beginning Teachers, 1999”
Sensitive to a new teacher’s basic needs.
New teachers are provided with relevant information — often in handbook form — about certification and professional development requirements. This information covers student achievement standards, testing schedules, and expectations for local teachers.

Rich with professional development opportunities.
New teachers are offered high quality professional development workshops, as well as ample time for personal growth and reflection.

Helpful to administrators.
Building administrators are given in-depth training about the characteristics of effective new teacher support systems, with particular emphasis on the importance of confidentiality between mentor and new teacher.

Mentoring: The Best Option
Making the transition from student to teacher requires more than learning where supplies are kept and how to keep order in the classroom. A successful transition requires an understanding of policies and procedures, leadership skills, a willingness to learn and share, and a sense of confidence.

That’s where mentoring comes in.

Mentoring has a long history. In Homer’s Odyssey, Mentor was entrusted to teach Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Today, some 3,500 years later, mentors enhance prospects for success in many professions — including education.

Teacher mentoring programs have been in place for about a generation. Currently more than half of states in this country require mentoring for entry-level teachers.

Mentoring provides new teachers with support and also helps build long-term relationships that can lead to classroom success. Mentoring programs offer new teachers a practical way to overcome the many hurdles they face in their critical first year.

“My mentor has helped me tremendously, not only on a professional but personal level, too,” says Danielle Simms, a middle school teacher in Southern California’s South Bay. “I honestly don’t know if I’d be here today if it weren’t for her guidance and support.”

It’s in their first year that new teachers adopt the habits that will ultimately determine whether they will continue to teach. According to a 1996 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, the lack of guided induction into teaching and isolation cause many beginning teachers to develop undesirable coping mechanisms that thwart their effectiveness and limit learning.

VOICES: “My education warned me about the kid who claims that the dog ate the homework, but not about the kid who was up all night in the emergency room with her sister who was stabbed. We are taught to teach students, but not people who live in a very real, very scary world. Gangs, broken homes, violence, and fear. These are the unwritten realities of the teaching profession.”

— Lisa Shipley, a middle school teacher in Richmond Heights, Missouri
Mentoring can help prevent this downward spiral. In California, a 1992 study by the state’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing found mentoring, the most effective approach to supporting new teachers.

But good mentoring is not easily accomplished. Starting a mentoring program inevitably raises a host of difficult issues: the selection of mentors, how mentors and new teachers are assigned or matched to each other, how formal or informal the mentoring relationship should be, how mentors should be rewarded for their contribution, and where the time for mentoring can be found.

By taking the time to address these issues, teacher effectiveness will improve. Ultimately, it is the students — our country’s future — who will benefit.

The Mentor’s 13 Jobs

Georgia Archibald, a retired teacher from Missouri, describes new teacher mentoring as a process that opens the door to the school community and helps new faculty encounter wisdom from all the teachers in a building.

Those chosen to become mentors navigate new teachers to this open door of wisdom. Mentors help beginning teachers learn about the complex job of teaching and help them feel good about their abilities and ideas. Mentors also convey and uphold the standards, norms, and values of our profession.

Mentors play many roles. A mentor typically functions as:

► A Counselor — Mentors provide a confidential, candid, and supportive environment that gives the psychological support necessary to help new teachers stay committed to teaching.

► A Teacher — Mentors help new teachers refine their teaching practices and understand the learning needs of all students, especially those students at risk, with special needs, and from diverse cultural and linguistic homes.

► A Challenger — Mentors challenge new teachers to do their best, by assisting them in content areas and helping them obtain professional development training.

► A Coach — Mentors help new teachers improve their classroom teaching, by offering assistance with classroom management and discipline strategies.

► An Observer — Mentors observe new teachers in action and provide timely and ongoing coaching and support.

► A Facilitator — Mentors help new teachers access a broad variety of professional experiences, by arranging meetings with other new teachers and observations of master teachers in action.

VOICES: “Mentors are many things — counselors, friends, advocates. But at my school they’re also like priests at confessional. Administrators may alert a mentor to a problem a new teacher is having, but the administration is never allowed to ask mentors anything about the new teachers and mentors aren’t allowed to talk to administrators about new teachers. This confidentiality is everything. It makes for a safe and secure relationship.”
— Susan Smith, a second-year high school teacher in Mill Valley, California
A Trainer — Mentors conduct workshops and other professional development training for new teachers, other mentor teachers, and building administrators.

A Master — Mentors use current education techniques and are proficient with education technology.

A Tour Guide — Mentors help orient new teachers to both the workplace and the culture of the community, by supporting and facilitating meaningful parent and community involvement in and with the school.

An Advocate — Mentors advocate for new teachers by offering their thoughts and ideas in ongoing and annual assessments of the mentoring program.

A Role Model — Full-time mentors demonstrate to new teachers the importance of “classroom connection” by returning to their own classrooms within three years.

A Reporter — Mentors share the success of the mentoring program with all who will listen and report frequently to the joint oversight committee.

An Equal — Mentors do not supervise. They serve as peers and colleagues to new teachers.

VOICES: “In my first year of mentoring, I felt like a new teacher. The information was given to us quickly, and I felt lost. You are fumbling around trying to look like a mentor, but what you really need is someone to mentor the mentor.”
— Phyllis Williams, member, professional development committee, United Teachers of Los Angeles

What Do Mentors Need to Succeed?

Two words help summarize best what mentors need to succeed in their new role: training and support.

“We must remember that the mentor role is a new one for classroom teachers,” says Ellen Moir, director of the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz. “Mentoring requires careful training and lots of ongoing support.”

In Missouri’s Francis Howell School District, mentors are trained at the beginning of the year and are then visited individually and with their mentees throughout the year by a full-time release teacher whose job it is to help oversee the mentoring program.

In Arizona’s Glendale Union High School District, mentors receive three weeks of training and planning time during the summer. They also participate in monthly planning and informational meetings throughout the school year.

Mentoring training can happen at a variety of different levels. Some programs schedule multiple days for training both mentors and new teachers.

Some programs provide mentors with ready access to the counsel of higher education faculty. Others provide mentors with common office space, which allows them to meet with each other on a regular basis, discuss coaching strategies, share instructional resources, and plan additional ways to help their new teachers.
Matching Mentors with New Teachers

Every new teacher support system is unique, but there is one constant: Success often lies in the selection and matching process of mentor and new teacher.

“A carefully chosen mentor from the same grade level or subject area is vital,” says Carol Kolbe, fourth grade teacher in Whitehall, Michigan. “The mentor probably should be a volunteer instead of administrator-assigned and should be close by within the building. This is a good place for the Association to become involved.” —

In programs where mentors are selected on their interest and enthusiasm for forming relationships with new teachers, everyone benefits.

Similarly, after the mentor selection process, program coordinators must match mentors with new teachers on the basis of school site, grade-level experience, curriculum content, and specialization, such as bilingual education or special education.

VOICES: “Teachers need to be at the center of new teacher support efforts — as designers and implementers as well as participants. These efforts can only be successful when educational organizations value teacher learning as central to the achievement of students and are willing to commit the time, energy, and resources needed to make it happen.”

— Ellen Moir, director, the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz
Words of advice: “Know going in that establishing a new teacher program will be all-consuming. It takes time and energy to educate and get the people who need to be involved on-board: your district superintendent, administrators, school board, and community. If you don’t have complete buy-in from all of those people before your program begins, it will be harder to sustain it in the long run. Also consider getting a second-year teacher involved in the planning, as you’ll get real insight into what that person — and all new teachers — go through their first year.”

— Ellen Healey, Manchester Education Association president

Where Mentoring Works: Real Examples

New Teacher Mentoring
Manchester Education Association
Manchester, New Hampshire

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“We’ve been planning this new teacher mentoring program for three years, but the excitement around it is still contagious,” says Manchester Education Association President Ellen Healey.

Healey spent much of 1997 trying to help the district superintendent, principals, and school board understand the need for a new teacher support system. After months of organizing, Healey finally had everyone she needed on board, and, in 1999, she attended NEA’s “Challenge of Change” conference with the town’s mayor, school board members, parents, the district superintendent, and some building principals.

At the conference, the Manchester team worked together to develop a mentoring model. Their first charge: form an oversight committee to run the program. Committee members now include leaders from the Association, an administrator, a second-year teacher, the district assistant superintendent, a representative from the mayor’s office, a school board member, and two assistant principals.

This committee developed a formal application process and, from it, chose nine teachers to pilot the mentoring program the following fall. They also worked with the University of New Hampshire to develop an in-depth training course for the mentors, which currently meets once a week. The university is developing more courses for the mentors and will offer a mentoring certificate to those who complete 15 credit hours.

The district has committed substantial dollars for the program, but specifics remain to be bargained into the local’s next contract. Healey is hoping that at least half of the mentors will be released full-time from their classroom duties for at least one year. The district and Association have agreed upon a yearly stipend for mentors — a set percentage of the base salary, about $3,800 per year. As the base salary increases, so will the stipend.

The Manchester program will provide ongoing workshops for new teachers.

“How can we not get involved?”

“’We are committed to providing activities for new teachers, especially after we saw their excitement after the ‘I Can Do It’ workshop,” says Healey. “They wanted to know when the next workshop would be. When there’s that kind of anticipation, you have to follow through. There’s an obvious need here we can help fill. How can we not get involved?”
New Teacher Mentoring
NEA-North Kingstown
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

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Last year, legislators in Rhode Island passed a bill requiring all school districts to provide mentoring to new teachers. In response, North Kingstown school officials reached out to the union — specifically to NEA-North Kingstown President Leo Maynard — for help.

“We had wanted to develop a partnership for some time, but the law is what really pushed us into action,” Maynard explains.

Together, the Association and district formed a committee — consisting of Maynard and four other veteran teachers, two new teachers, one building administrator, the district curriculum director, the human resources director, and the pupil personnel director — to take charge of implementing a program.

The committee members attended a workshop sponsored by the state department of education and gathered some good, basic resources to help them get started. They also held a forum for district employees to get input.

“We asked really open-ended questions about what we needed to include to make this a successful endeavor,” says Maynard. “The response was overwhelming. The number one issue that kept coming up was time — everyone felt that time had to be given for both mentor and new teacher to work together.”

The Association and district eventually agreed to give participants up to three days off, in addition to conference days, to work together and visit other classrooms.

Twenty mentors, chosen from a formal application process, are initiating a “pilot” version of the program this year. They all have at least three years of experience in the North Kingstown district and have completed a two-day mentor training prior to the beginning of school. There is no mentor stipend, but the district has offered each mentor $500 worth of classroom resources as an incentive.

Ultimately, the committee hopes to make it mandatory for new teachers to participate, and assign mentors to new teachers in the same school and grade level on a one-to-one ratio.

“We’ll be bargaining the program into our contracts this spring, so for now, we’ve all operated a little on blind faith,” Maynard says. “But I’m not sure I would have done it differently. Our program is what it is because we’ve been making changes as we go along — kind of a ‘work in progress.’ I think that’s what a new teacher support system should be — where ongoing evaluations are built in and changes are made accordingly.”

Words of advice: “Don’t get discouraged if your administrators don’t agree to giving mentor stipends right away. Instead look for other ways to attract and recognize potential mentors. For example, our district gives mentors $500 to purchase classroom resources, ordered through the district. Granted, it’s not a big stipend, but it is $500 of their own money that they won’t have to spend.”

— Leo Maynard, NEA-North Kingstown president
**Peer Coaching**

**Birmingham Education Association**  
**Birmingham, Michigan**

Contact: Joan Kasle,  
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(248) 358-4770

Two years ago, after attending an NEA national conference, Birmingham Education Association President Joan Kasle approached her district’s superintendent about establishing a new teacher support system. Kasle was inspired by what she had learned at the conference about a joint peer coaching program in Cherry Creek, Colorado.

“It was exactly what we needed,” Kasle says.

The district superintendent was impressed, too. So the district and Association formed a joint committee — with four teachers, two building administrators, and two district administrators — to develop a program purpose and plan. The committee then chose two full-time release peer coaches who, along with Kasle and the superintendent, spent four days in Cherry Creek gaining first-hand knowledge about that district’s model program.

The peer coaches in Birmingham, both Association members, are now responsible for 15 new teachers each. One works at the secondary level and the other at the elementary. The two were trained in cognitive coaching skills. They do not receive a stipend, but they do receive their regular salary plus pay for overtime worked.

The peer coaches observe all new teachers in the district on a weekly basis and confer with them afterward on an individual basis. They also plan and conduct monthly after-school workshops. Kasle stresses two important factors for mentoring program success. First, the district must see the program as a priority and come through with funding and resources. Her district completely funds the program and has even published a booklet about it.

The other factor: confidentiality between new teacher and peer coach. Explains Kasle: “Our number one criteria in choosing our coaches was based on their ability to keep new teacher trust. They don’t talk about job performance to anyone except the new teachers.”

The rewards from mentoring, says Kasle, are abundant.

“The new teachers are joining us because they are seeing first-hand the value of the Association,” she says. “They are getting the message we’re sending: that we truly care about their success in the classroom and will help them in anyway we can.”

Sums up Kasle; “This is what I want people to remember me for. I’ll be retiring next year, and this, by far, is my greatest achievement.”

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**Words of advice:** “Keep administrators and school board members focused on the need for a new teacher support system and plan on spending lots of energy reassuring them that the things they do — evaluations, for example — won’t get taken away from them. Helping teachers succeed in their jobs is something new, and you probably won’t get immediate buy-in from veteran administrators. Just be patient and keep everyone focused on what is best for new teachers, and, ultimately, the profession.”

— Joan Kasle, Birmingham Education Association president
**Peer Mentor Program**
Manitowoc Education Association
*Manitowoc, Wisconsin*

Contact: Bob Jome,
Manitowoc Education Association President
(920) 683-4861 ext. 6239
jomeb@mpsd.k12.wi.us

“We’ve been informally mentoring new teachers for years now,” says Manitowoc Education Association President Bob Jome. “But in the last year that informality has turned into a serious undertaking.”

Both the Association and district are feeling an urgent need to help new teachers succeed. Wisconsin lawmakers recently passed tough new standards for teachers, and the state is expected to soon implement a policy that would require new teachers to assemble examples of their work before they could be fully certified.

“That’s why a main part of the relationship between mentors and new teachers in our program centers around helping new teachers put together a portfolio,” says Jome.

To help new teachers feel comfortable in front of the camera — important because a video is part of the portfolio requirements — mentors in Manitowoc tape their new teacher at least once per quarter and then, together, discuss and evaluate what they see on the video.

Mentors and new teachers also consult with each other on a weekly basis and are given up to five days of release time to visit each other’s classrooms throughout the school year. They also participate in a one-day training during the summer and spend the week before school begins setting up their classrooms and getting to know each other.

Mentor teachers are nominated by their peers or nominate themselves. The ultimate decision on who mentors is made by the Association leaders and administrators who sit on the district’s Mentor Steering Committee. Mentors receive a $600 stipend.

Jome, a mentor himself, is thrilled that such a significant emphasis has been placed on the mentor program.

“Becoming a mentor is one way to pay service to our profession, to keep it viable,” he says. “It demonstrates to everyone how committed we are to making sure every child has a quality teacher. That is a strong and very important message to convey.”

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**Words of advice:** “Make sure all veteran teachers know how important it is to help new teachers. A lot of times, teachers assume that just because a mentoring program is in place they don’t need to reach out to the beginners. We overcame this by implementing Learning Teams at each school — where six times a year all the teachers from one subject or grade level get together to discuss issues, concerns, and students. This strengthens the mentoring program and reinforces the concept that helping new teachers succeed is everyone’s job.”

— Bob Jome, Manitowoc Education Association president
When Chris Guinther transferred from teacher to curriculum and instruction facilitator for the Francis Howell School District in 1993, her top priority became helping new teachers succeed. Since then, she has helped implement a successful new teacher mentoring program as well as a Beginning Teacher Network (BTN), both co-sponsored by the district and local Association.

As part of her job, Guinther visits with mentors and new teachers on a regular basis. She also sits on a Professional Development Committee that oversees the mentoring program. Mentors and new teachers are given up to three release days to meet together, and mentors receive a $350 stipend.

But, says Guinther, the mentoring program wouldn’t be such a success if not for the Beginning Teacher Network.

“Mentoring is a great thing, but I think even more powerful is the opportunity to collaborate with your peers, which the BTN encourages new teachers to do,” she says. “First-year teachers have told me that it is the isolation of their job that is so demoralizing. They need a place where they can talk confidentially with other new teachers.”

Guinther says the new teacher support is definitely working.

“Many of our new teachers have friends in other districts who are already planning on leaving the profession,” she says. “Our beginners credit the mentoring and BTN for helping them stay in the profession. They feel comfortable in the classroom and in their new careers. If they start losing that comfort level, then they talk about it with us. That’s what makes the difference.”
Teacher Assistance Program
Sweetwater Education Association
Rock Springs, Wyoming

Contact: Linda Merrell,
Sweetwater Education Association president
(307) 352-3400
sea@rock.sw1.k12.wy.us

“We’ve been constantly revising as we progress,” says Sweetwater Education Association President Linda Merrell.

The idea for her district’s Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) originated during bargaining in 1997. But the program has evolved substantially since then.

“After receiving federal class size funds last year, which can be designated to fund mentor stipends,” Merrell notes, “we revised the program.”

Every teacher now new to the district, with less than three years of experience, is assigned a TAP mentor. TAP assistance is also provided to experienced teachers who request help with their professional growth and development.

A committee of seven people runs the program — four appointed by Merrell and the Association and three appointed by the district superintendent. This committee selects mentors, assigns them to participating teachers, provides both mentor and new teachers with training and professional development, and evaluates the progress of each mentor/new teacher pair on an ongoing basis.

Mentors — who are not full-time release — are trained to use a variety of peer assistance techniques like cognitive coaching, clinical observation, and conferencing skills. They are given $1,200 stipends for their work.

Mentors and new teachers must meet together a total of 75 hours — 50 in the first semester alone. Communication can be done via phone, E-mail, and face-to-face contact. Each mentor conducts at least three new teacher observations, and, together, the pairs participate in seven workshops throughout the year.

“By reaching out and getting lots of people involved from the beginning, we received tons of resources that helped us develop our program,” says Merrell.

Merrell’s local UniServ director provided the planning team with information about mentor programs in other school districts. The NEA local affiliate president in Boulder, Colorado shared copies of its mentoring program proposal. And Association members from Laramie, Wyoming drove three hours to Rock Springs to share their expertise with the Sweetwater fact-finding committee.

“My advice is to reach out and contact those of us who have done mentoring,” says Merrell. “There’s also great information on the Internet and through the NEAPractical Library. It’s definitely worth it.”

Lesson Worth Sharing: “Don’t let your district’s unwillingness to fully fund a new teacher support program deter you. Be creative in finding the funding because it’s out there. Our program cost us $25,000 this year, and we have managed to scrape along thanks to federal program funds — like Title 2 and Title 6.”

— Linda Merrell, Sweetwater Education Association president
“Best of the Best” Student Mentor Program
Clarksville-Montgomery County Education Association
Clarksville-Montgomery County, Tennessee

Contact:
Ron Pendergrass, Clarksville-Montgomery County Education Association UniServ director
(931) 358-5744
rpendegrass@tea.nea.org

Robyn Brumblay, Clarksville-Montgomery County Education Association president
(931) 552-3186

UniServ director Ron Pendergrass. “It focuses on the preparation of pre-service teachers. Many mentor programs are a collaborative effort, but ours goes one step beyond: We also collaborate with a major university.”

Now in its second year, the program is supported by NEA Urban Grant funds and aid from both the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System and Austin Peay State University. Students who participate apply to the program after their sophomore year and must commit to more than 1,000 hours of classroom observation in two years. In their final semester, students “take over” their mentors’ classrooms.

“The time commitment is big, but so is the payoff,” says Pendergrass. “Normally students go through 10 or 12 weeks of student teaching and then are thrown into classrooms. Through our program, students are actually being educated in the classroom — like a lab — where they meet most of their core curriculum requirements on the job.”

The students are placed in one-to-one relationships with mentor teachers throughout the program and get a small stipend for participating. Mentors receive a $500 stipend per semester as well as adjunct faculty status at Austin Peay, tuition-free graduate courses, and discounts at the university bookstore.

Both mentors and new teachers receive in-depth training about their responsibilities in the program, and everyone involved meets together once per month to debrief and participate in workshops. Mentor teachers, building principals, and university professors all take part in evaluating the students.

“These students are working incredibly hard,” says Pendergrass. “It’s our hope that they’ll get to know us and, with luck, ease right into full-time positions after graduation.”

Pendergrass is thrilled with the positive feedback from everyone involved.

“We’re currently talking with the state education department to see how we might use our program model as an alternative means to teacher certification,” he says. “We’re also hoping to use what we’re learning to develop a mentoring program for practicing teachers.”

Words of advice: “Reach out to your community and form partnerships. The partnership we’ve established with our local university has been priceless — they’ve come through with funding and with incentives to encourage our teachers to become mentors. We couldn’t have gotten this far without that relationship.”
— Ron Pendergrass, Clarksville-Montgomery County Education Association UniServ director
New Teacher Mentoring
Paradise Valley Education Association
Paradise Valley, Arizona

Contact:
Gloria Siciliano,
Paradise Valley Education Association president
(602) 992-8110
pvea@aol.com

Paradise Valley Education Association President Gloria Siciliano always knew she wanted a new teacher support system in her district. She also knew getting such a system wouldn’t be easy, so she did some legwork before approaching district administrators.

“We knew if we had some money going in,” says Siciliano, “administrators wouldn’t see a new teacher support program as such a stretch.” In 1997, her local applied for and won a $4,000 NEAurban grant.

The local was then able to get a matching commitment from the school district. Local and district leaders went to Seattle and Columbus, Ohio to learn first hand about new teacher support systems.

“We spent several days with Association leaders in each city,” says Siciliano. “That was February 1998. It then took us about a year to decide exactly how our program would look and where we would get the funds to make it happen.”

The result is the Paradise Valley School District Mentoring program, which officially began in August 1999. The program is mandatory for new teachers.

Five full-time release mentor teachers, or “consulting teachers,” meet with new teachers, or “associates,” on a one-to-one basis—at least once every two weeks. New teachers are also provided with monthly seminars and monthly newsletters.

Consulting teachers meet with each other once per week to touch base about their progress. All have at least five years experience in the district, in addition to their masters degree or National Board Certification. They have each agreed to return to their classrooms within two years.

“This is so much more than a mentoring program,” says Siciliano. “New teachers are getting help in goal setting, lesson planning, and aligning their curriculum with Arizona standards. They also have someone to turn to when they have questions. The result is a stronger teaching force for our kids. Everyone is just thrilled with our progress.”

Adds Siciliano: “It’s also strengthened the relationship between the district and the Association. I’m now getting ‘good news’ calls from building principals about how much the consulting teachers are helping the new teachers. That’s something I definitely didn’t anticipate, but it’s a welcome change.”

Words of advice: “Do some initial research or apply for some funding before you approach your administration about partnering. The more the Association can offer from the start, the more influence the Association will have throughout the design and implementation process. A good new teacher support system will take time to develop. Don’t expect it to happen overnight.”

— Gloria Siciliano, Paradise Valley Education Association President
How To Establish A New Teacher Support Program

Want to start your own new teacher support system? Try following this 12-step guide.

1. Get people involved — Identify constituencies you think should be represented in the development process and establish a new teacher support task force or oversight committee. In collaboration with the school district, the committee should seek information about setting up a new teacher support system. The group will then facilitate and coordinate support for new teachers.

2. Survey your members — Determine if there is support for establishing a new teacher support system (see page 27).

3. Educate yourselves — Learn about other new teacher support programs and, if possible, visit with the local Associations involved to get more information.

4. Contact your NEA state affiliate — Alert your UniServ director and state Association. They can help you with additional resources, advice, speakers, and more contact information.

5. Collect data — Familiarize yourself with information about your district, school, and community. Answer the questions posed on page 28.

6. Identify possible constraints — Analyze data collected to identify possible constraints.

7. Design your program — Based on the specific needs in your district, identify the desired outcomes of your program. Clarify your goals by asking yourself what the purpose of mentoring is, conductives needed for successful mentoring, and what the results of the mentoring program will be.

8. Clarify the role and duties of the mentor teacher — Check out Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program, from the foundation created by NEA, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education at Internet at www.nfie.org or by calling (202) 822-7840.
   - What do mentors have to do to accomplish our program’s purpose?
   - How much time will they need to do this?
   - What are we looking for in our mentors?
   - How and who will we select our mentors? Will mentors be trained?
   - What incentives will we offer mentors? Will they be compensated? How will we support them in their duties?

VOICES: “I was hired on a Saturday and started working on Tuesday. In two days, I got materials, went to teacher stores, borrowed from other teachers and put up bulletin boards to make this room look like a classroom. I’m confident about my ability to succeed and do a good job, but I also know I have a tremendous amount to learn.”

— Howard Traylor, in his first year as a first-grade teacher in Oakland, California
• Will mentors be trained?
• How will mentors be matched with new teachers?

9. Develop and negotiate contract language — Study issues such as: (See page 30 for samples.)
• The role and purpose of the oversight committee.
• The purpose, description, and characteristics of your program.
• Selection, role, function, professional development released time, compensation, and tenure of the mentor teacher and the number of new teachers assigned a mentor teacher.
• Reduced workload for new teachers, time to meet with mentors, and time to observe other selected staff working with students.
• Additional compensation for mentor teachers.
• Op-out clause without discrimination.
• A system to assess the effectiveness of the program.

10. Implement a mentor training program — In collaboration with your district, create and deliver a training program for mentor teachers, the oversight committee, and Association building representatives. See sample training agendas, pages 32-33.

11. Get in touch with your new teachers — Host a new teacher orientation to the new teacher support system and introduce them to your district and community. Alert new teachers to the following resources:
• NEA’s New Teacher Web site.
• NEA state affiliate new teachers materials.
• Copies of significant school district documents such as your contract, leave agreement, field trip policy, teacher evaluation policy, grading policy, requirements for relicensing and tenure, professional development requirements, class size standards, procedures and calendar for administering standardized tests, procedure for securing and using substitute teachers, and handbook of school district resources.

12. Think towards the future — Working with your school district, plan a series of events for new teachers and their mentors throughout the year. Conduct periodic and annual reviews of your program. Share the results with your local university and work as a partner in better preparing education students to enter the teaching profession.

VOICES: “I never thought that teaching would be such an exhilarating and rewarding career, continually pushing me in my quest to be a master educator. My job is creeping into every aspect of my life. How many people can pick up a box of cornflakes and have it trigger an idea for a lesson plan about government regulation?”

— Jeffrey Breedlove, a high school teacher in Overland Park, Kansas
Key Questions To Consider Before You Begin

There is no one program design that meets the needs of every district in every situation. Districts with large numbers of new hires or those experiencing recruitment difficulties may wish to structure their new teacher support systems differently than districts where large-scale turnover is less of an issue.

The following questions will help identify the needs, issues, and concerns of your district, community, and school. Design a new teacher support program based on your answers to:

- What is our current new teacher retention rate? Look at data from the last three to five years to assess how many new teachers are leaving your school or district.
- How are new teachers assigned to classrooms? Are new teachers qualified to teach their assigned classrooms?
- How many teachers are teaching out of their field? How many have “emergency” certification?
- Are new teachers given adjunct duties on top of their teaching assignments?
- Is there a new teacher orientation before school starts? What kind of support are new teachers given throughout the school year?
- Are new teachers given district guidelines, procedures, student standards, and expectations?
- Are resources given to help new teachers with student discipline and classroom management?
- Are teachers given time to collaborate? If not, why?
- How do veterans and new teachers relate? Are veterans responsive to new teacher ideas, concerns, and first year experiences?
- How can the district culture support or undermine a new teacher support system?
- Where will funding and other resources come from — the district or grants?
- What is the perception of the district in the community? Are parents involved in their children’s education?
- Is technology available (access to E-mail, online forums, electronic bulletin boards) to support new teacher communication?

VOICES: “I have found the time I spend with my mentor extremely helpful. We meet during our planning time for at least one hour every week. It’s nice to have someone to share ideas with and help me learn the ropes. We discuss big issues and little issues, and work on curriculum together. It’s challenging. There’s a lot to teach, and not that much time to teach it.”

— Sarah Fruchey, a first-grade teacher in Belding, Michigan
The New Teacher Support Oversight Committee: Role and Function

Every good new teacher support program has a committee that “oversees” design, function, programs, and evaluation. An oversight committee ensures adequate resources for the program and provides it with credibility and purpose.

In places where new teacher support programs are thriving, the oversight committee meets to plan, problem-solve, debrief, suggest improvements, and evaluate the program. Ideally, the committee is half teachers selected by the local education association and half administrators selected by the school district.

The committee administers the program, selects mentor teachers, oversees professional development, secures necessary resources, and more.

Ten Tips for Connecting with Your New Teachers

Even if you’re not yet ready to establish a formal new teacher support program in your district, you can — and should — connect with your new teachers. The suggestions below can be implemented on a quick turnaround basis — yet their impact will be very long-term.

By filling this need, the Association becomes appealing to new teachers. And by reaching out to new teachers when they are new to the profession, our Association will benefit for many years to come.

1. Use technology — E-mail, online forums, and electronic bulletin boards for new teachers are easy, inexpensive ways for inductees to share ideas, concerns, and encouragement with each other. They can also be used to communicate with mentors, program directors, and university faculty. Check out Missouri NEA’s Beginning Teacher Listserv at www.mo.nea.org.

2. Take new teachers on a tour of the district — Before the start of the school year, take new teachers on a tour of your district on school buses. Offer informational sessions on insurance and payroll, membership benefits, classroom management, and the first day of school.

3. Offer professional development training just for new teachers — Host workshops for new teachers on certification, state student standards, and professional development requirements. Consider hosting a Making the Most of a Starting Salary: Financial Planning for Beginners course. Provide new teachers with personal balance sheets, a sample spending and goal chart, investing, tips and retirement

VOICES: “Perhaps the single most important aspect of building a new teacher support program is bringing together all of the stakeholders to design it. When we began back in 1988, there weren’t any program models to follow. We had to ask ourselves: ‘If we want new teachers to learn and develop over time, what do we need to put in place so they can be successful?’”

— Ellen Moir, director, the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz
advice. Remind teachers of the Association’s professional resources.

4. Give new teachers good resource materials — Alert new teachers to state affiliate handbooks for beginning teachers, the NEA Web for new leaders, and other resources at a new teacher orientation.

5. Offer grants to new teachers — Help new teachers obtain their Master’s degrees with small tuition grants. See the Missouri NEA Web site for more information: www.mo.nea.org/begtch/grants.html.

6. Sponsor monthly seminars — Encourage new and veteran teachers to discuss issues like assessment or personal health maintenance at monthly seminars. Invite teachers to make presentations and answer questions. Veterans can share their experiences with new teachers.

7. Host an “Idea Exchange” — Once or twice a year host an “idea exchange” meeting where teachers can share information about projects they are working on or challenges they are encountering. Open up the floor for ideas to help new teachers feel comfortable in both offering ideas and asking for help.

8. Sponsor a new teacher “Rookie Club” — Create a “Rookie Club” or new teacher caucus where moral support, resources, and curriculum ideas can be exchanged. An informal peer network allows new teachers to struggle together with common fears and frustrations. Provide refreshments and Association giveaways.

9. Sponsor an Online “Help Me” service for new teachers — Establish an E-mail address where new teachers can request help or advice inside or outside the classroom. Respond on a timely basis, so new teachers get their answers by the next business day.

10. Provide new teachers with a “New Teacher Guide” — Create a “New Teacher Guide” to answer questions about each school, its staff, instructional material and supplies, and planning. Address how copies are made, how to get a substitute, and how to get instructional materials.

VOICES: “Mentors are great. Our state mandated a mentoring system for first-year teachers. When we met, we focused on one topic or need. It helped me to get concrete ideas, to know ahead of time what to expect, and to come to the learning activity well-prepared.”
— Rebecca Baumann, a high school teacher in Troy, Michigan
Description
This survey is designed to assess our members’ interest in creating a New Teacher Support System or Mentor Teacher program in our district.

1. Would you be willing to participate as a mentor in a new teacher support system?
   Yes_____  No_____

2. Would you be willing to serve as a resource to the new teacher support system?
   Yes_____ No_____  

3. Please list a colleague that you think would be an excellent resource in implementing this program. ____________________________________________________________.

   May we use your name as a reference?_________________________________
   (please print your name)

4. What three specific elements do we need in a new teacher support program to make it successful (please list in order of importance)?

5. What elements exist in our school/district culture that may undermine the success of a new teacher support system?

6. What other comments or concerns do you have about establishing a new teacher support program?
Sample Surveys

Pre-Mentoring Survey: New Teachers Share Their Views

1. Previous teaching experience, including student teaching:

2. List your three strongest assets as a teacher:

3. List three areas of concern as a new teacher to this district:

4. How often would you like to meet with a mentor teacher?

5. In what ways do you think a mentor teacher would be helpful to you?

6. In what activities do you expect your mentor to engage you?

How would you rate your skills in the following areas:
(1= developing, 2=confident, 3=accomplished)

___ Lesson planning
___ Planning for a substitute teacher
___ Large group instruction
___ Small group instruction
___ One to one instruction
___ Behavior management
___ Developing and administering informal classroom assessments
___ Planning instructional units
___ Planning and producing instructional materials
___ Planning for students with special needs, including “at risk” and “gifted”
___ Parent conferencing and communication
___ Dealing with crisis in the classroom
___ Establishing rapport with faculty and staff
___ Understanding of teaching/learning styles
___ Understanding of cultural or ethnic differences
___ Ability to set appropriate levels of expectations for student achievement

Please list on the back any area of concern that was not addressed on this survey.
**Self-Survey: Should I Become a Mentor?**

This checklist is designed to help teachers who are thinking about becoming mentors. Please place an X in the column that represents the degree to which the statement characterizes the way you see yourself. You’ll find space provided after the checklist to add those qualities that represent the unique or special assets you might bring to mentoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I see myself as being people-oriented. I enjoy working with other professionals.</td>
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<td>2. I am a good listener and respect my colleagues.</td>
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<td>3. I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.</td>
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<td>4. I recognize when others need support or independence.</td>
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<td>5. I want to contribute to the professional development of others and share what I have learned.</td>
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<td>6. I am willing to find reward in service to someone who needs my assistance.</td>
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<td>7. I am able to support and help without smothering, parenting or taking charge.</td>
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<td>8. I see myself as willing to adjust my schedule to meet the needs of others.</td>
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<td>9. I usually am patient and tolerant when teaching someone.</td>
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<td>10. I am confident and secure in my knowledge and try to remain up-to-date.</td>
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<td>11. I enjoy the subject(s) I teach.</td>
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<td>12. I set high standards for my students and myself.</td>
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<td>13. I use a variety of teaching methods and my students achieve well.</td>
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<td>14. Others look to me for information about subject matter and methods of teaching.</td>
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<td>15. Overall, I see myself as a competent professional.</td>
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<td>16. I am able to offer assistance in areas that give others problems.</td>
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<td>17. I am able to explain things at various levels of complexity and detail.</td>
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<td>18. Others are interested in my professional ideas.</td>
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<td>19. *</td>
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* Reserved for descriptions of your unique and special assets for mentoring.
Sample Contract Language

Text for illustrative purposes only. Consult with legal counsel before adopting or adapting any language here.

**SAMPLE 1:** Manitowoc Public School District Board of Education Teachers’ Agreement Teacher Mentor Program [see page 17 for details about this program]

A. Teachers newly hired to the District shall be assigned a veteran teacher mentor and must participate in a five-day induction program prior to in-service week. The newly hired teacher will be paid at the summer curriculum rate for the induction program.

B. Veteran teachers who are selected as mentors must participate in a mentor training workshop during the summer for which they will be compensated at the summer curriculum rate. The mentor shall also participate in the induction program prior to in-service for which the mentor will be reimbursed at the summer school teaching rate. In addition, mentors will receive a stipend of $600 each year to compensate them for time spent before and/or after the teaching day meeting and working with their new teacher during the school year.

**SAMPLE 2:** Sweetwater School District #1 Teacher Assistance Program [see page 19 for details about this program]

**Relationship to Teacher Evaluation**

The primary purpose of the TAP is to provide teachers with site specific and/or content specific assistance through peer coaching and conferencing with mentors.

The requirements for summative evaluation contained in the SSD#1 Professional Development Plan shall remain the responsibility of the school administrator or designee. In order to promote the highest levels of trust and assistance, strict rules of confidentiality shall be maintained through the concept of the data curtain between mentor and the teacher’s evaluator. Observation data and discussion between the participant and mentor shall remain confidential unless the participant requests that data be shared with the building evaluator when all parties are present. The exception to the data curtain would occur at the beginning of an evaluation cycle when the principal should share expectations and goals for improvements and/or remediation with the participant and mentor. The mentor should include these areas in the observations and consulting dialogue with the participant.

Mentors shall not provide data or testimony in subsequent job renewal or dismissal actions.

When the participants exit from the program, that action shall be deemed to be without prejudice. Mentors shall provide to the TAP Panel information regarding hours of observations, issues addressed, feedback sessions held, and other pertinent general summative judgments for the performance of the participant.

**Participant Selection for Program**

Based on available funding and a desire to maintain a 1:1 ratio between mentor teachers and program participants, the TAP Panel will annually select participants for the program from the following tiers:

A. Teachers who must be admitted to the program are those new, with less than three years of experience to SSD#1.

B. Teachers who may be admitted to the program based upon Panel decision:
   a. new, with more than three years of experience.
   b. any teacher who has self-referred.
   c. teachers referred by building principal or supervisor, if the teachers so desire.

If an evaluator recommends a teacher for the TAP process, the evaluator shall notify the teacher and the TAP panel in writing. Such notification shall include the basis for seeking the assistance.

If a teacher self-recommends for the intervention process, the teacher shall notify his evaluator and TAP panel in writing. Such notification shall include the basis for seeking the assistance.
Recommendations for participation in the program shall be discussed by the teacher and evaluator before being forwarded to the panel.

**SAMPLE 3:** Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools and Austin Peay State University “Best of the Best” Teacher Mentor Program (see page 20 for details about this program)

(Proposed Mentor/Student Placement Program)

I. LEA Mentor Application/Screening Program
   - The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) as the LEA will develop a Mentor Application and Screening Program for prospective mentor teachers. Teachers who want to participate will be reviewed, interviewed and accepted into the mentor program based upon standards developed and implemented through the Department of Instruction in the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System. Final decision for selection of the mentor will rest with the Office of the Director of Schools.

II. LEA Mentor Program Supervision
   - Academic Supervisors for the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools will be responsible for on-site supervision for the duration of the Austin Peay State University (APSU) student’s training period in the program. APSU will also supervise students it places in the program.
   - The CMCSS Department of Instruction will require all mentors and APSU student program trainees to share a dual role in the classroom, especially if the program is of one year duration.

III. Program Funding Incentives for CMCSS Mentors
   - Mentor participants in the program will be funded at the local level by the CMCSS.
   - Mentor stipends will be paid for four days of mentor training.

   Example:

   a.) 2 mentors for each elementary school, i.e. X 17 elementary schools = 34 X $75 per day X 4 days equals mentor training cost of: $10,200.
   - Mentor board supplement will be paid for mentor training. Example:
     a.) The CMCSS will request a Board approved funding supplement consisting of $500 per mentor teacher in the program. Funding based upon the possibility of 34 mentor teachers would consist of: $17,000.
   - Mentor program training and board supplement cost.
     a.) Possible funding cost to the CMCSS for one year of program funding as the LEA would total: $27,200.
   - Individual mentor (possible earning for a one-year local term in CMCSS)
     a.) Each individual LEA mentor teacher could expect to earn an addition $800 per year as a mentor in the LEA program working with APSU students.
   - Possible mentor supplement from APSU.
     a.) This does not include any possible funding from APSU, i.e. possible mention of adjunct faculty status equal to an additional $1,200.

IV. Future Employment of Student Trainees
   - The CMCSS will be interested in the employment of the student trainees at the end of their program based upon some of the following conditions.
     a.) If the CMCSS has appropriate positions available.
     b.) If the student trainee meets the SEA and LEA certification requirements.
     c.) If the trainee meets the CMCSS employment practices.
     d.) CMCSS will accept positions in Special Education, Music, Art, etc. if conditions for the system’s needs and those of the students are met.
Sample Mentor Training Program Outline

Day 1
- Mentoring processes and relationships; reflections on mentor’s own first year of teaching.
- Mentor roles and responsibilities; history of mentoring.
- Definition and types of coaching.
- Establishing rapport and developing trust.
- Environmental difficulties of teaching.

Day 2
- “Top 12” first year problems encountered by beginning teachers from research literature.
- Active listening.
- Building collegial relationships; communicating with administrators, peers, parents, and students; providing moral support.
- Establishing effective routines and procedures; environmental classroom factors.

Day 3
- Helping new teachers stay on top of their workload.
- Long range, unit, and weekly planning models.
- Classroom management techniques and discipline models.

Day 4
Observation process, observation tools and coaching.

Two days of mentor/new teacher training includes:

Day 1
- Needs assessments for mentors and new teachers.
- Goals of the mentoring program; roles for mentors, role of new teacher.
- Trust building.
- Joint planning for classroom management and discipline.
- Joint planning for the first day of school.
- Discussion of parent communications.
- Introduction to long range, unit, and weekly planning.
- New teacher-only discussion of strengths/needs/concerns.

Day 2
- Feedback on mentor and new teacher needs assessment administered on Day 1.
- Joint long range planning revisited.
- Trust building.
- Joint nuts and bolts planning in new teachers’ building.
- Active listening.
- An overview of assessment.
- Celebrating the joys of teaching and learning.
Mentor Training Program
North Kingstown, Rhode Island Mentor Training

DAY 1
8:00 a.m. Registration/Coffee
8:30 a.m. Welcome
Introductions
9:00 a.m. My First Year in Review
10:00 a.m. Break
10:15 a.m. Building a Foundation
Mentor Relationship
Effective Teaching
Instructional Leadership
12:00 p.m. Lunch
12:45 p.m. Adult Learning
Hunt's Model
Case Studies
2:15 p.m. Questions and Answers
Evaluation

DAY 2
8:00 a.m. Registration/Coffee
8:15 a.m. Model Mentor Characteristics
9:15 a.m. Cognitive Coaching
10:15 a.m. Break
10:30 a.m. Pre and Post Conference Skills
11:30 a.m. Lunch
12:15 p.m. Setting Goals
1:00 p.m. Letter to Myself
Questions and Answers/Evaluation
Sample New Teacher Workshop Agenda

Tools For Your First Days of School
Francis Howell School District
Building Excellence Together
August 16, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 - 8:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Breaking Ground &amp; Setting the Foundation:</strong> Check-in/Breakfast/Socializing/Introduction “Educational Jargon” &amp; “Who’s Who in Francis Howell?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.  | **“K-W-L” & Discussion**  
• What is your biggest concern?  
• What do you feel you need immediately? |
| 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. | **“The Ideal Teacher”**  
Who was s/he? Why do you remember her/him as ideal?  
How did it feel to be a student in that classroom?  
How was this teacher a professional? |
| 10:00 - 10:15 a.m.| Break                                                                   |
| 10:15 - 11:00 a.m.| **Blueprint for Success** - “The First Days of School” Harry Wong        |
| 11:00 - 11:45 a.m.| **“The Ideal Classroom”**  
How will it look, sound, feel? (Carousel Activity) |
| 11:45 - 12:30 p.m.| Lunch - provided by the Francis Howell Education Association            |
| 12:30 - 1:15 p.m.| **Update from the District Curriculum Facilitators**                   |
| 1:15 - 2:15 p.m. | **Managing the Site. . . Effective Classroom Discipline**               |
| 2:15 - 2:30 p.m. | **Surveying the Results**  
Review the “Tools for School” Checklist |
| 2:30 - 3:00 p.m. | **Final Inspection**  
What have you learned?  
Answers to “Educational Jargon”  
Resources  
Review notecards, K-W-L chart & write letter  
Next steps. . . what do you need to do next?  
Evaluate the day. . . what tools did you acquire for your toolbox? |

Special on-site inspections: Dr. Lee Brittenham, Dr. Dan Brown, Dr. Tim Ricker, Dr. Sheila Cone, Dr. Dan O’Donnell
Nuts and Bolts: A special “THANKS!” to the Francis Howell Education Association for providing lunch!
Association and Other Resources

- Helping New Teachers Succeed: NEA’s New Teacher Support Initiative (Mentoring New Teachers) — A comprehensive, in-depth manual developed by Chuck T. Williams, director for teacher quality initiatives, NEA. For a copy, contact Marilyn Schlief or Timothy Crawford in NEA Teaching and Learning, 202/822-7350.

- Beginning Teachers on the Web — NEA’s Web site for new teachers (www.nea.org/bt) includes hands-on tips, printable resources, and interactive features that range from a day-to-day diary of a beginning teacher to the ability to post messages about current issues in education.

- Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program — NEA’s Foundation, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning (NFIE), has developed a 16-page booklet for members that offers guidelines for designing effective new teacher mentoring programs. Get it on the Web at www.nfie.org or by calling (202) 822-7840.

- Stepping Forward: How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America’s Public Schools — This 1999 report describes what NEA members are making to redesign public schools and features a state-by-state list of Association mentoring programs. On the Web at: www.nea.org/newunion/stepfwd/.

- New Unionism News — This quarterly spotlights NEA local affiliate efforts to improve public schools in communities across the country and covers recent efforts to support new teachers. On the Web at: www.nea.org/newunion/news/.

- It’s All About Kids — NEA’s award-winning CD-ROM for new teachers is now available on the Web, at www.nea.org/bt.

- NEA Professional Library — With nearly 20 books just for new teachers, as well as a wealth of books and videos that promote high quality teaching and learning, the NEA Professional Library has become the nation’s most practical source for professional development. See titles, order books, and access free online material at www.nea.org/books/.

- Beginning Now: Resources for Organizers of Beginning Teachers, 1999 — This 54-page, comprehensive compilation of recent research about new teachers is available from NEA at www.nea.org/btvc/kuttner.html.

- Draft Model Legislation for New Teacher Mentoring Programs — This packet contains draft model legislation for states interested in legislatively establishing a state supported new teacher mentoring system. Contact Chuck T. Williams, director for NEA Teacher Quality Initiatives, at (202) 822-7703 or ctwilliams@nea.org.

- Peer Assistance and Review — A background resource published jointly by NEA and the American Federation of Teachers. Contact Chuck T. Williams, director for NEA Teacher Quality Initiatives, at (202) 822-7703 or ctwilliams@nea.org.


- Peer Mentoring Training Materials — This publication, published by NEA’s Training and Organization Development team, highlights information about the basics of mentoring and includes material on adult learning theory and reflective practice. Also contains an extensive peer mentoring training design. To request a copy, call Kelly Cedeno at (202) 822-7183.

- I Can Do It — This one-day training for new teachers was developed by the California Teachers Association. The training covers classroom management, communication styles, dealing with difficult behavior and more. For more information about the training, call (650) 697-1400 ext. 5322 (need to get this information from Sandra Jackson, CTA).

- The University of California, Santa Cruz New Teacher Center — This national resource center offers intensive support to districts across the country that are committed to building a high quality model of support and assessment for beginning teachers. For more information, go to the Web at www.newteachercenter.org or E-mail ntc@zzyx.ucsc.edu.

- Generation X Caucus — This new teacher group, sponsored by members of the Texas State Teachers Association, is a good source of support for your new teachers. To be added to an E-mail list, send your name, local association, home address and phone number to Jennifer K. Walker at jkwalker@tenet.edu. Dues are $5.

- A Survey of Mentoring and Induction Programs in Each of the United States — This Web site details state-mandated new teacher induction programs. Includes brief descriptions and histories. Available at: www.teachermentors.com/MCenter%20Site/StateLinks.html.

- Three Phases of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship — This document details the three phases of the mentor-new teacher relationship and addresses the needs and concerns of both at each phase. On the Web at www.coled.mankato.msus.edu/dept/lablist/mentor/interpersonal/menteePhase.asp.
