

Handbook for Mentors

New Teacher Induction Program





Table of Contents

Page 1

Introduction

Page 2

Strategic Focus: Mission, Beliefs, and Goals

Page 3

Mentoring Network

Page 4

Mentoring Overview

Page 5

Mentoring & Coaching: What is the Difference?

Page 6

High Impact Mentoring

Page 7

New Teacher Self-Assessment

Page 9

First-Year Teaching

Page 10

New Teacher Mentoring: Anticipation Phase

Page 11

New Teacher Mentoring: Survival Phase

Page 13

New Teacher Mentoring: Disillusionment Phase

Page 16

New Teacher Mentoring: Rejuvenation Phase

Page 17

New Teacher Mentoring: Reflection Phase

Introduction

Dear Mentor,

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a mentor to a newly hired teacher. Mentoring is a partnership to support and guide new teachers. As a mentor, we hope that you find satisfaction, purpose, and joy in knowing that you are helping to promote the growth of a colleague.

We all faced our first days in our classroom with excitement, anxiety, and feelings of being overwhelmed. Hopefully, you had a wonderful mentor who provided the guidance which made those first few years more bearable. This mentoring opportunity will be your chance to pass along your wisdom and experiences to help your mentee discover how wonderful it is to be part of Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

Even the best-prepared new entrants face steep learning curves as they apply what they have learned from their pre-service programs in complex school settings. At the same time that new educators assume their teacher roles, they are still learning to teach. So, they need expert and responsive guidance in using effective instructional practices. In addition, they need assistance navigating other challenges during the initial year, such as working with administrators, colleagues, and parents and learning about their school communities and local policies and procedures.

The primary goal of this handbook is to provide relevant and practical information, resources, and topic ideas for mentors as they guide the development of beginning teachers. As you will discover in this handbook, a network of district supports surrounds you as a mentor. Enjoy the journey and reach out when you need something!

Dr. Glenda Horner
Director for Professional Learning

Tonya Dixon
New Teacher Induction Program Coordinator

The teachers hired today are the teachers for the next generation. Their success will determine the success of an entire generation of students. – Harry Wong



Strategic Focus

The strategic framework of the district's New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program provides focus and clear direction in terms of best practices in supporting teachers new to Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

OUR Mission

To increase student achievement by providing purposeful, structured, and systemic support services that develop and retain quality teachers.

OUR Beliefs

- The teacher is the most critical element in students' success and achievement.
- A purposeful, structured, and systemic induction program increases the potential growth and development of teachers.
- It is essential that a new teacher induction program provides various levels of support in order to retain quality teachers.
- The communication and implementation of high standards and expectations is required to maintain a culture of excellence in CFISD.

OUR Goals

- To provide purposeful, structured, and systemic support services for teachers new to Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.
- To improve instruction of teachers new to Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.
- To retain quality teachers new to Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.



Mentoring Network

The new teacher induction and mentoring program in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is built around a network of supports with a laser focus on the success of each newly hired teacher. These supports work to foster both personal and professional growth.

NEW TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM (NTIP) COORDINATOR:

- Provides training, resources, and support to appointed Lead Mentors
- Collaborates with campus administration to provide needed supports for new teachers, mentors, and lead mentors
- Ensures the implementation of induction and mentoring activities at each campus
- Monitors program success by gathering data and feedback for continuous improvement

LEAD MENTORS:

- Attend and actively participate in district share sessions for Lead Mentors
- Serve as liaisons between the district and the campus
- Coordinate campus-based mentoring and induction activities
- Offer assistance to principals in matching mentors and mentees
- Provide resources and support to mentors
- Facilitate regular share sessions for mentors and mentees
- Train others to become mentors
- Assist in planning and carrying out orientation and continuous improvement activities
- Assist mentors with accessing and navigating through the mentoring portal
- Ensure mentors are entering mentoring activities and hours in the mentoring portal
- Collaborate with other Lead Mentors to share expertise and successful practices

MENTORS:

- Establish and nurture a solid relationship with their mentee
- Help new teachers meet the procedural demands of the campus
- Provide support and function as a sounding board for new ideas
- Provide support and professional feedback as the mentee experiments with new ideas and strategies
- Engage the mentee in self-assessment and reflection of their own practice
- Enter mentoring activities and hours in the mentoring portal
- Attend regular mentor/mentee campus share sessions



Mentoring Overview

Mentoring relationships are proven to augment productivity, employee engagement and retention. Connecting with mentees (new teachers) and building these relationships can be one of the most fulfilling parts of your career. The relationship is mutually beneficial to both the mentor and mentee.

Benefits of Mentoring

For Mentors

Greater confidence in leadership abilities

Enhanced communication skills

Greater feeling of career fulfillment; boost in self-esteem

Opportunity to use and develop leadership skills

Personal satisfaction of guiding a new teacher

For Mentees

Increased self-awareness and self-efficacy

Enhanced communication skills

Greater feeling of connection to campus; boost in self-confidence

Improved ability to facilitate learning and manage the complexities of teaching

More firmly grounded in teaching and learning



Mentoring & Coaching

What is the Difference?

Mentoring and coaching differ in their purpose, impact, and duration.



MENTORING

VS.

COACHING



MENTORING: Someone who supports teachers by providing guidance or counsel

COACHING: Someone who supports teachers by helping with the “how” of teaching

MENTORING: Passes along organizational knowledge

COACHING: Collaborates with teachers in designing instruction

MENTORING: Serves to steadily foster growth and development by creating a culture of learning

COACHING: Serves in the “field” (classroom) observing and modeling lessons

MENTORING: Formal mentoring period may be finite, but the relationship may continue

COACHING: Often has a timebound relationship defined to meet specific goals

“Show me a successful individual and I’ll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don’t care what you do for a living—if you do it well, I’m sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor.”

DENZEL WASHINGTON



High-Impact Mentoring

Mentoring programs have a tremendous impact on employee development, talent retention and engagement. Mentoring is a personal experience. To create a “safe space” where both mentee and mentor can learn and grow – the relationship must be built around trust, genuineness, effective communication, and self-reflection. These qualities pave the way for high-impact mentoring to occur.

Trust



Trust between mentor and mentee is an essential component of an effective mentoring relationship. Successful mentoring relationships absolutely depend on it. As you know, trust isn't something that comes quickly or easily – instead it requires time and patience to build. Trust is often linked to openness, mutual reliance and respect, as well as the willingness to be vulnerable in some way.

Genuineness



Another important aspect of the mentoring relationship is genuineness, or the sense that the mentor is being authentic. One way that mentors can convey authenticity is to occasionally disclose something personal about themselves or their lives. Another is making and admitting to mistakes and being fallible. Mentors who exude a genuine spirit are seen as more authentic and approachable.

Effective Communication



Effective communication is essential to building a trusting and strong mentoring relationship. Ideally, you'll have frequent (daily/weekly) conversations with your mentee that occur face-to-face or through text/email. Consider having an open-door policy, or, if you prefer, set boundaries about times you're available. Be sure to observe and listen to what is being said as well as what's not!

Self-Reflection



The reflective mentor not only critically reflects after mentoring conversations but has the ability to detect and use their own feelings and thoughts in the moment. This requires a high level of presence and mindfulness. Really masterful mentors can unconsciously pick up on finely nuanced signals from the mentee – reflection in the moment allows those signals to be brought into the conversation and explored.



New Teacher Self-Assessment Inventory

A Step-by-Step Guide for Mentors

RATIONALE

The New Teacher Self-Assessment Inventory is designed to assist new teachers in a self-reflective process for improving their own teaching practices. Mentors are encouraged to use this tool with their mentee as a guide for initiating conversations around standards for teaching based on the Cypress-Fairbanks Teacher Evaluation & Support System (CF-TESS). **This tool is not intended in any way to be used in the evaluation process but as a vehicle for self-directed growth.** The following steps are provided to assist mentors in initiating the process and conversations with their mentee.

SETTING THE STAGE

To maximize the process for utilizing the New Teacher Self-Assessment Inventory, consider the following:

- Set a time to meet with your mentee that will allow for privacy and uninterrupted time together.
- Ensure confidentiality of what is discussed.
- Explain to your mentee that this process is in no way connected with the evaluation process but is a tool for self-reflection and self-directed learning/growth.
- Upon completion of the process, the mentee should retain the only copy of the New Teacher Inventory Assessment and any notes that may have been taken.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NEW TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT INVENTORY PROCESS

1. Explain the rationale and parameters listed above to your mentee prior to giving the self-assessment. Ask your mentee if he/she is comfortable in participating in this self-reflective process. If so, continue to the next step. (Note: If the mentee is uncomfortable with the process, explain that it is voluntary and confidential, and that you will answer any questions or concerns he/she may have.)
2. Have your mentee complete the New Teacher Assessment Inventory. Responses should be based on mentee's experiences, feedback from team, former evaluations, and personal observations of student performance. This is intended to extend thinking and reflection on the mentee's total experience.
3. After completing the assessment, ask your mentee the following questions:
 - Based on your self-assessment, on what standard would you like to focus today?
 - What led you to select this standard?
 - What evidence do you have that leads you to think that this is an area for focus?
 - What do you already know about effective teaching strategies for that standard?
 - What are some ways to measure improved practice for that standard?
 - What are some next steps you could take toward improved practice/growth in this area? (Mentees can use the "Next Steps and Ideas" section of the inventory to write down generated ideas).
 - What additional resources and professional development could you pursue to assist you?
 - In what ways can I assist you as your mentor?

NOTE: Sometimes conversation can move in a direction that is not focused on standards. Although emotional support is part of the mentoring process, it is important to maintain a focus on teaching standards and what impacts student learning in this self-reflective process.

4. Plan a follow-up time to meet that allows for reflective practice and future focus.



New Teacher Self-Assessment Inventory

A Self-Reflective Process for Mentees

In the areas below, please indicate the response for each item that best matches your concern/need level. Use this inventory with your mentor to determine areas for support, identify resources and set learning goals.

1. I am really anxious about this.
2. I'm okay, but it would be good to talk about this.
3. I've got this under control, at least for now.

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTION

DOMAIN III: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Achieving Expectations	3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines & Procedures
2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise	3.2 Managing Student Behavior
2.3 Communication	3.3 Classroom Culture
2.4 Differentiation	
2.5 Monitor and Adjust	

NEXT STEPS AND IDEAS:

Adapted from Lipton, L. Mentoring Matters (2003). Mira Via.

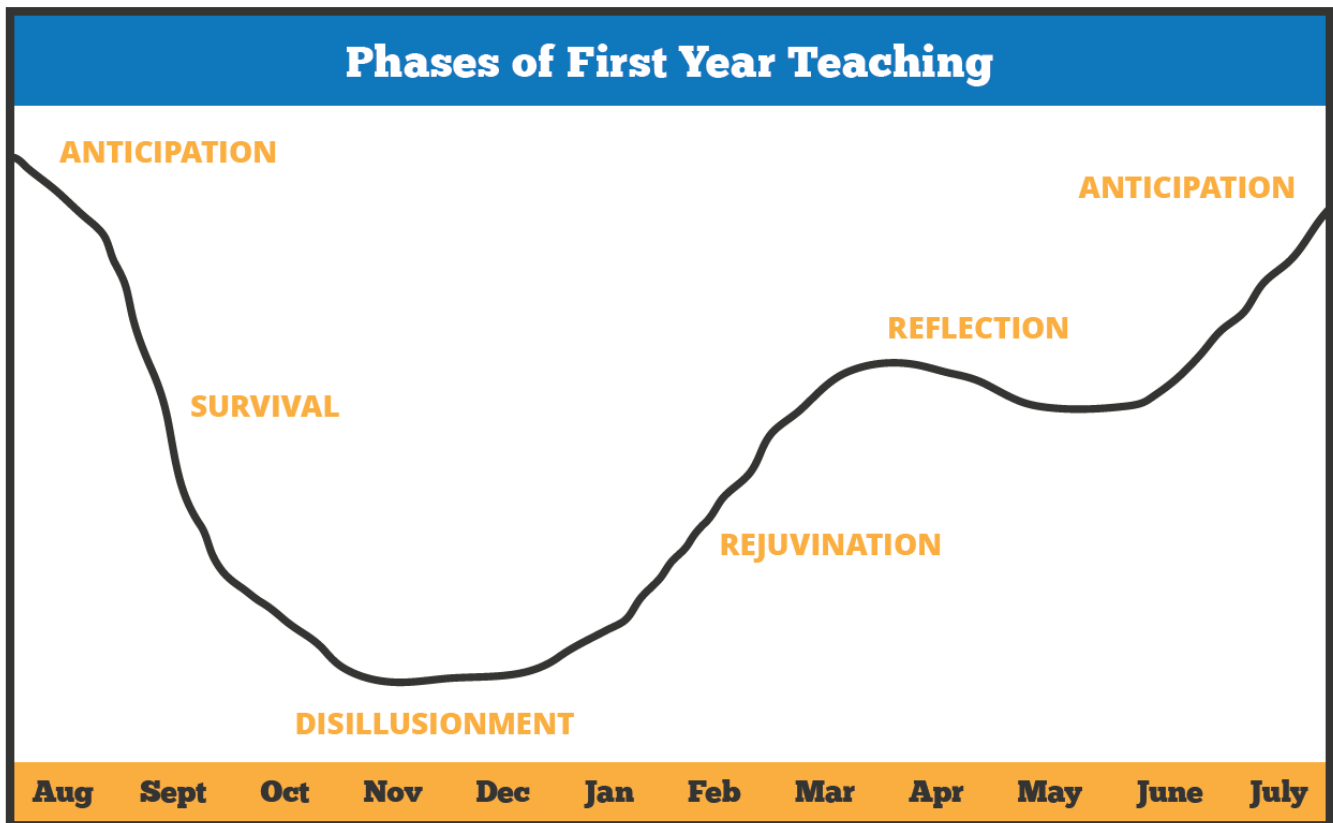


First-Year Teaching

First-year teaching is a difficult challenge. Equally challenging is figuring out ways to support and assist beginning teachers as they enter the profession. While not every new teacher goes through this exact sequence, these phases are very useful in helping everyone involved — mentors, lead mentors, administrators – in the process of supporting new teachers. These teachers move through several phases from anticipation, to survival, to disillusionment, to rejuvenation, to reflection; then back to anticipation.

It is critical that we assist new teachers and ease the transition through each of these phases. Recognizing the phases new teachers go through gives us a framework within which we can begin to design support programs to make the first year of teaching a more positive experience for our new colleagues.

The purposeful design of the district's New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program is structured around these phases. Simply stated – it is about meeting the new teacher where he/she is at and supporting them along the journey. The goal, of course, is teacher retention. With this in mind, the resources provided in this handbook are geared toward new teacher mentors and provides practical resources for mentoring the new teacher through each phase.



Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The Stages of a Teacher's First Year.



New Teacher Mentoring

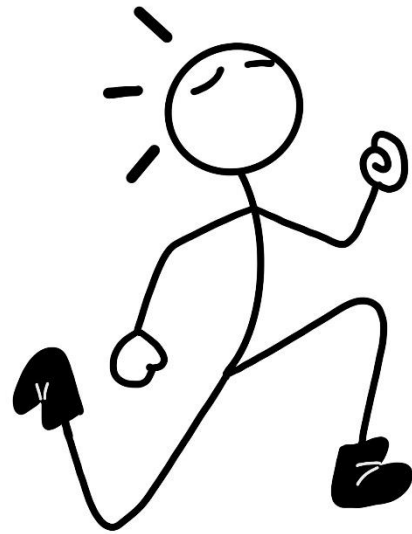
Prior to First Day with Students

Anticipation Phase

The anticipation phase begins prior to the start of the school year. The closer to the first day of instruction with students, the more excited and anxious the new teacher becomes about their first teaching position. They tend to romanticize the role of the teacher and the position. New teachers enter with a tremendous commitment to making a difference and a somewhat idealistic view of how to accomplish their goals. This feeling of excitement carries new teachers through the first few weeks of school.

Connect with your mentee as soon as possible. Your initial meeting will create the foundation on which the relationship is built. Consider using the topics that follow as a starting point for discussions. These are not the only concerns or questions your mentee may have, so please add to the list as needed.

Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The Stages of a Teacher's First Year.



- Establish a scheduled time to meet with your mentee for the first semester
- Show location of resources (classroom supplies, copy machines, etc.)
- Share first day/week activities – provide guidance on organizing the first day & first week
- Discuss grading procedures and processes
- Confirm that your mentee has access to curriculum materials and resources
- Introduce your mentee to other teachers, particularly staff members in their department and proximity to their room
- Ensure that all necessary technology is in place including any needed computer software
- Assist your mentee in navigating the various district online resources (CFPGS, Schoology, etc.)
- Ensure that teacher passwords are noted in a safe place
- Discuss and/or provide samples of classroom procedures, grading policies, attendance policies, and classroom set up
- Discuss the emergency procedures
- Discuss staff norms such as dress code, lunch, and any social events that typically occur throughout the year



New Teacher Mentoring

September - October

Survival Phase

The first month or two of school is very overwhelming for new teachers. They are learning a lot and at a very rapid pace. Beginning teachers are instantly bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated.

During the survival phase, most new teachers struggle to keep their heads above water. They become very focused and consumed with the day-to-day routine of teaching. There is little time to stop and reflect on their experiences. It is not uncommon for new teachers to spend up to seventy hours a week on schoolwork. Although tired and surprised by the amount of work, first-year teachers usually maintain a tremendous amount of energy and commitment during the survival phase, harboring hope that soon the turmoil will subside.

During this phase, your mentee will need some extra attention, so please take a moment to discuss the following topics and anything else that may be at top of mind.

Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The Stages of a Teacher's First Year.



- Check to make sure emergency lesson plans are in place
- Discuss the appraisal process (walk-throughs and formal observation)
- Assist with the goal-setting process (Personal Professional Goal & Goal for Student Growth)
- Observe each other's classroom instruction sometime between October and December (one observation each during this time frame)
- Debrief department, grade level, team, and committee meetings; answer questions about unknown terms, acronyms, or unclear processes; be prepared to explain the rationale for or history behind decisions
- Discuss how their classroom management & discipline plans are going; connect your mentee to other resources (campus behavior interventionist, courses in CFPGS, etc.), as appropriate
- Review how grades are reported and how grade reports will be distributed to parents
- Explain the spirit weeks/special events and extra-curricular activities
- Show your mentee where they may find opportunities for professional development
- Ensure that your mentee has received paperwork and information for students receiving support through special education, dyslexia, 504, or other related service



New Teacher Mentoring

October - December

Disillusionment Phase

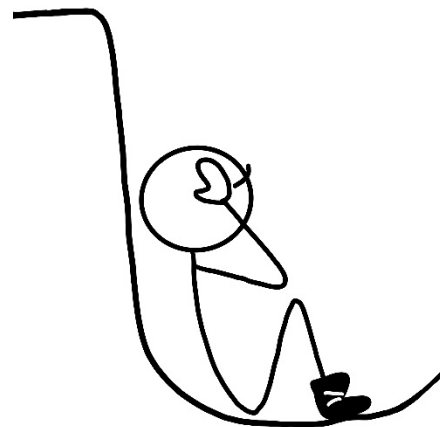
After six to eight weeks of nonstop work and stress, new teachers enter the disillusionment phase. The intensity and length of the phase varies among new teachers. The extensive time commitment, the realization that things are probably not going as smoothly as they want, and low morale contribute to this period of disenchantment. New teachers begin questioning both their commitment and their competence. Many new teachers get sick during this phase.

Compounding an already difficult situation is the fact that new teachers are confronted with several new events during this time frame. They are faced with back-to-school night, parent conferences, and their first formal evaluation by the site administrator. Each of these important milestones places an already vulnerable individual in a very stressful situation. During the disillusionment phase classroom management is a major source of distress.

At this point, the accumulated stress of the first-year teacher, coupled with months of excessive time allotted to teaching, often brings complaints from family members and friends. This is a very difficult and challenging phase for new entries into the profession. They express self-doubt, have lower self-esteem and question their professional commitment. In fact, getting through this phase may be the toughest challenge they face as a new teacher.

Knowing the physical fatigue and inner struggle your mentee may be facing, seize opportunities to share times, past or present, that did not work out as you had planned along with some of the strategies you used to move past them. In addition to the topics provided on the following page, it is important to celebrate successes along the way. A handwritten note of appreciation to your mentee might be one way that you share highlights and successes so far.

Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The Stages of a Teacher's First Year.



As a new teacher in Cy-Fair, my principal provided me with a "Sunshine Folder." She encouraged me to add to it any positive notes I received along the way. Each time I received a note of praise or encouragement from a colleague, administrator, parent, or student, I added it to my folder. Moving forward, anytime I had "one of those days," I made it a point to read the notes I'd received along the way. The simple act of reading the notes often provided the boost I needed. It made all the difference in the world!

Thirty plus years later, I still keep a "Sunshine Folder."

Dr. Glenda Horner
Director for Professional Learning



New Teacher Mentoring

October - December

Disillusionment Phase

- Consider providing your mentee with a "Sunshine Folder" to which they can add positive notes they receive along the way from colleagues, administrators, parent, and students
- Assist your mentee in preparing for any upcoming parent conferences
- Discuss how busy both professionally and personally it is between Thanksgiving and Winter Break and how to keep the students engaged and productive
- Share "tricks of the trade" to get through the upcoming weeks and preventing burn out
- Discuss concerns/successes of students
- Discuss the common assessment guidelines and procedures
- Talk about the end of semester procedures
- Review inclement weather day procedures and how they will be notified
- Share information from observations of each other
- Discuss district and school holiday events and local happenings
- Start discussing changes the teacher would like to make for the second semester
- Consider a "walking" versus "sitting" meeting for a change of pace and as a means of reenergizing

Tips for Banishing Feelings of Disillusionment

Slow Down – When reacting quickly to situations or events, we tend to overreact or revert to old patterns of behavior that do not serve us well.

Validate Your Emotions – Acknowledge and validate your feelings as they are often a form of self-protection. By admitting how you feel, you give your emotions less power. Give yourself permission to have a completely non-productive evening or weekend.

Accept Reality – Accept that you will inevitably make mistakes -- especially when you're learning new skills. The initial euphoria associated with starting something new will always fade into a more sobering reality, even when you're pursuing something worthwhile.

Relinquish Control – It may sound counterintuitive but letting go of control can give you a deeper sense of control and peace in a situation. Being overly tense will only slow you down and lead to frustration.

Maintain Hope – Slow down, trust the process and still have hope at the same time. This too shall pass.



New Teacher Mentoring

January - April

Rejuvenation Phase

The rejuvenation phase is characterized by a slow rise in the new teacher's attitude toward teaching. It generally begins in January. Having a winter break makes a tremendous difference for new teachers. It allows them to resume a more normal lifestyle, with plenty of rest, food, exercise, and time for family and friends. This vacation may be the first opportunity that new teachers have for organizing materials and planning curriculum. It is a time for them to sort through materials that have accumulated and prepare new ones. This breath of fresh air gives novice teachers a broader perspective with renewed hope.

They seem ready to put past problems behind them. A better understanding of the system, an acceptance of the realities of teaching, and a sense of accomplishment help to rejuvenate new teachers. Through their experiences in the first half of the year, beginning teachers gain new coping strategies and skills to prevent, reduce, or manage many problems they are likely to encounter in the second half of the year. Many feel a great sense of relief that they have made it through the first half of the year.

During this phase, as new teachers begin to emerge from disillusionment and turn toward rejuvenation, they will naturally start looking more at long-term teaching strategies, becoming more focused on curriculum development, and a renewed commitment to better organization.

The rejuvenation phase tends to last into spring with many ups and downs along the way.

Toward the end of this phase, new teachers begin to raise concerns about whether they can get everything done prior to the end of school. They also wonder how their students will do on state assessments, questioning once again their own effectiveness as teachers.

As new teachers look to the new semester, they will start reflecting on their practices from the first semester and may make adjustments to their classroom procedures. Your mentee has made it to the top of the hill and has gained a better sense of where they need to go from here. The ideas that follow are designed with this phase in mind. Feel free to add and adjust topics, as needed.



Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The Stages of a Teacher's First Year.



New Teacher Mentoring

January - April

Rejuvenation Phase

JANUARY

- Establish times for mentor/mentee meetings for second semester
- Discuss common assessment practices including testing procedures and testing ethics
- Reflect on the highs and lows of first semester
- Discuss any changes the mentee might light to make with regard to routines and procedures
- Verify that your mentee has all necessary resources and materials for the second half of the school year
- Discuss strategies for working with struggling learners and make a plan for ensuring the success of all students
- Discuss strategies and ideas for strengthening home/school connections (i.e. postcards home, email, newsletters, etc.); remind your mentee that these strategies can be used to acknowledge something a student is doing right or well, not always as a means to correct behavioral concerns
- Discuss the appraisal process (mid-year goal reflection)

FEBRUARY & MARCH

- Review upcoming district and building activities
- Discuss learning resources to suggest to parents when asked how they can help support their student's learning
- Review the appraisal process (walk-throughs and formal observation); foreshadow upcoming end of year conferences
- Schedule a time to observe each other's classroom sometime between February and May
- Encourage your mentee to observe another teacher's classroom sometime between February and May
- Discuss upcoming STAAR/EOC testing procedures and schedule
- Discuss strategies for overcoming the February/March slump (remember this phase is full of ups and downs)
- Seek out potential workshops or classes to enroll in to help guide your mentee with areas they wish to pursue or may want additional strategies or knowledge
- Acknowledge something your mentee has done well or worked hard to accomplish



New Teacher Mentoring

January - April

Rejuvenation Phase

APRIL

- Continue discussions regarding the importance of partnerships with parents
- Discuss your observations of your mentee's classroom; keep criticism constructive; highlight improvements and things they do well; provide references to people, websites, or books which may assist them in preparing for next year
- Discuss their visit to another teacher's classroom; inquire what they liked; what they thought might work well for them; consider observations they made about how the teacher related to the students
- Foreshadow upcoming end of the year ceremonies and awards programs
- Ensure your mentee is aware of school supplies lists and procedures for the upcoming school year

Rejuvenation: Inner and Outer Renewal

We give so much of ourselves as educators. Burnout lurks around the corner unless we intentionally take steps to renew our inner and outer selves.

To renew our inner and outer selves is simplex: simple on the surface, yet complex as you peel away the layers:

Rest: Find ways to take breaks and unplug. Our bodies need rest to move forward. Teaching can be emotionally and physically exhausting, so take care of yourself.

Movement: Physical movement, exercise, and recreational activities get the body moving. Studies have shown that every time you move your body, a number of beneficial neurotransmitters, including dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin and acetylcholine, gets released into your brain. These naturally occurring substances can decrease stress while improving focus and concentration.

Seek Wisdom: One of the symptoms of burnout is isolation. Rather than pull away, reach out and find at least one person whom you can turn to for advice, wisdom, and guidance.

Refocus on Your Why: Teaching is a marathon. It is fast paced; it is exhausting; it is never "over" when the day is done. Ground yourself in your greater purpose for choosing this profession. Doing so helps you gain clarity, stay focused, and remain passionate about the important role you serve as an educator. Press on!



New Teacher Mentoring

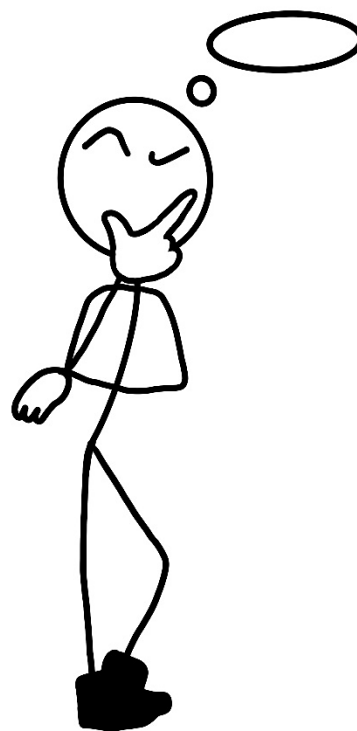
May

Reflection Phase

The reflection phase beginning in May is a particularly invigorating time for first-year teachers. Reflecting over the year, they highlight events that were successful and those that were not. They think about the various changes that they plan to make the following year in management, curriculum, and teaching strategies. The end is in sight, and they have almost made it; but more importantly, a vision emerges as to what their second year will look like, which brings them to a new phase of anticipation.

During this time take a moment to celebrate both your guidance as a mentor and the growth your mentee has made. In your final meetings this year with your mentee, make sure you also find time to discuss the topics below.

Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The Stages of a Teacher's First Year.



- Discuss end of year ceremonies and awards programs
- Discuss end of year school traditions
- Review end of year close out procedures
- Guide your mentee in determining possible changes regarding lesson design or classroom routines and procedures for the coming school year
- Review process for closing out grades for the year
- Share summer contact information and make plans to connect at least once over the summer break
- Celebrate!

“This year as a mentor, you’ve had a chance to pour into another. Throughout the mentoring process what have you learned about yourself? How have you grown as a teacher leader? Reflect on the year and what you’ve gained from the experience.”

TONYA DIXON, NEW TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM COORDINAOR



