

# **Frontier Central School District**

## **TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM**

The Mission of the Frontier Central School District is to inspire each student to exhibit integrity as a self-directed life-long learner, achieving personal goals while responsibly contributing to an ever-changing world.

**7/27/2004**

TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM

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## **MENTOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Paul Casseri, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel (co-chair)

Mr. Dave Ceccarelli, High School teacher (co-chair)

Mrs. Michele Marable, Higher Education Liaison/Canisius College

Dr. Elizabeth Bradley, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Mr. Scott Garvey, Middle School teacher

Mrs. Katie Grogan, Staff Development Coordinator

Mr. Robert Pollaro, High School Assistant Principal

Mr. Ed Przybyciel, Elementary teacher

Mr. Sam D'Amato, Administrative intern/Personnel office

Mrs. Kathy Pyne, Administrative intern/Instructional office

## **RATIONALE: WHY MENTORING?**

Parts 80-3 and 100.2 of the Commissioner's Regulations call for the successful completion of a mentoring experience, for first year teachers. Induction of new teachers is an important part of the overall preparation and professional development of beginning practitioners. Mentoring has been successfully used by numerous school districts to facilitate the integration of beginning teachers into the existing system. This program is based upon the concept that novice teachers can be more effective when they have the support that is needed to make them confident and comfortable in their assignments. Research and experience suggest that a third of those who enter the teaching profession leave within three years of service, citing lack of support as a primary reason for their departure. Our hope is that a formal mentor program will significantly increase the likelihood of novice teachers being successful.

The mentor will provide the novice with support, guidance, feedback, problem-solving strategies, and a network of colleagues who share resources, insights, practices, and materials. Mentoring also gives seasoned professionals the chance to leave their mark on the teaching profession by passing along knowledge and experience to the novice.

Mentoring is powerful because it offers the novice a non-judgmental, professional colleague who can familiarize him or her with the culture of the building, its policies, procedures, and practices. The focus of mentoring may center on curriculum, standards, assessments, instructional practices, classroom climate, or classroom management issues. The intended result of this support is indeed improved student learning. Mentoring is a non-evaluative process.

Over the years, Frontier has made a significant effort to provide an integrated and ongoing staff development program to promote effective classroom instruction and student achievement. Providing a formal structure through which both experienced and exemplary teachers can advise novice teachers in these teaching techniques will contribute to the beginning teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. The benefactors will be students attending Frontier Central Schools.

## MENTOR PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The Mentoring Program as proposed is a comprehensive program for the development of new staff. It is built upon the concept of the adult learner. Research has shown that professionals continue to develop competence when formal opportunities are presented for interaction. The Mentoring Program will provide these opportunities for both the novice teacher as well as the experienced teacher serving as mentor.

The primary responsibility of the mentor teacher is to guide and support the novice teacher through the first year of teaching in order to acclimate this person to our District, our curriculum, and our profession. Mentors will use a variety of techniques including conferencing, modeling, instructional assistance, and peer coaching. Mentors will invite novices to observe the thinking involved in lesson development, delivery, and assessment, thus demonstrating the power of reflective practice. Mentors will also provide feedback to novices and serve as “bridges” to other faculty members and administrators who may have valuable resources to share. During provided common time, the mentor may conduct activities such as curriculum mapping, conversations about student work, professional article reviews, or study groups to develop a more cohesive culture focused on student learning, and to widen the prospects for professional and emotional support for the novice.

The Mentoring Program will share some of the very same “Core Values” as Frontier Central School District’s Strategic Plan. These values include:

- All people can make a contribution.
- Everyone has value.
- Higher expectations result in higher achievement.
- People are empowered by taking responsibility for their choices.
- Life-long learning improves the quality of life.
- There is no growth without change.
- Powerful learning results from direct experience.

Finally, we believe teacher behavior should not be left to chance. The Mentoring Program offers a formalized process that will allow novice teachers to be integrated into our outstanding school District, as well as the opportunity for veteran teachers to leave their mark on both the Frontier Central School District and the teaching profession.

## GOALS STATEMENT

The Frontier Central School District's Mentoring Program builds on teachers' previous preparation and experience while fostering increased instructional expertise.

The following are the goals of our Mentoring Program:

- A. To improve teachers' performance and effectiveness in order to increase student achievement.
- B. To foster the role of the teacher as a problem solver and a decision maker for instructional, curricular, or student/parent related issues.
- C. To acclimate novice teachers to the culture of the school and the community.
- D. To promote the professional and personal well being of new teachers in an effort to increase teacher retention and job satisfaction.
- E. To build a foundation for continued professional growth and higher engagement in collaborative exchanges.
- F. To offer opportunities for new and experienced teachers to analyze and reflect upon their teaching.

## **THE MENTOR/NOVICE RELATIONSHIP**

The relationship that develops between the mentor and the novice teacher is central to an effective and meaningful mentoring experience. New teachers entering the profession face tremendous challenges. The demands of serving increasingly diverse student populations (along with the myriad of school culture issues inherent to the policies, practices, routines, and procedures of daily school operation) require a steep learning curve for a novice teacher. The mentoring experience can offer the novice teacher a non-judgmental, professional relationship that will help make the transition to the teaching profession more successful.

The knowledge, organizational skills, and wisdom of the experienced mentor teacher, coupled with the energy, enthusiasm, and eagerness of the novice, are key ingredients leading to a more productive and satisfying beginning teaching experience. In order for the relationship to be successful it must be supportive in nature and rooted in resource sharing, problem solving and professional feedback that will offer the novice teacher an opportunity to grow.

In general, the relationship should be characterized as professional, flexible, trustful, mutually educational, and entailing sustained, frequent contact. The relationship will be one to one and every attempt will be made to match mentors and novices in both grade and subject and building. The District will offer its support to the strengthening of the mentoring relationship through a joint orientation process, common training, social events, scheduling, and establishing a process to allow for the adjustment of the mentor/novice pairings.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE MENTOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

1. Completed application [Appendix A].
2. Minimum of five (5) years successful teaching experience within the Frontier Central School District.
3. Currently tenured.
4. At least one letter of recommendation from an administrator and one letter of recommendation from a teaching peer.
5. Demonstrates the ability to meet the criteria listed under Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor.
6. Strong commitment to the elements and goals of the Mentor Program.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF MENTOR TEACHERS**

1. Completed application [Appendix B].
2. Minimum of three (3) years successful teaching experience within the Frontier Central School District.
3. Currently tenured.
4. At least one letter of recommendation from an administrator and one letter of recommendation from a teaching peer.
5. Demonstrates the ability to meet the criteria listed under Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor.
6. Strong commitment to the elements and goals of the Mentoring Program.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

The Mentoring Program Coordinator orchestrates the implementation of mentoring for new teachers within the Frontier Central School District. The identified person will attend to various matters, including the scheduling of program activities, conferencing, classroom visitations, and mentor training. He/she assists the mentors and novices in reaching their professional goals.

The responsibilities of the Program Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- A. Collaborate with the Staff Development Coordinator to provide training for mentors and novices.
- B. Assist in the coordination of the New Teacher Orientation Program for mentors and novices.
- C. Coordinate monthly mentor/novice programming.
- D. Provide a self-reflection tool for mentors, novices, and administrators.
- E. Develop preliminary budget and oversee fiscal management for Teacher Mentoring Program.
- F. Compile mentor applications for presentation to the Teacher Mentoring Program Advisory Board.
- G. Facilitate mentor interview process.
- H. Preside as chairperson of the Teacher Mentoring Program Advisory Board.
- I. Cooperate in the annual evaluation of the Teacher Mentoring Program.
- J. Provide regular communications with mentors, novices, and administrators.
- K. Work with building administrators to facilitate common contact time between mentors and novices.
- L. Stay well informed of District regulations and policies.
- M. Meet with the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel to gather projections of the number of novice teachers needing mentoring, grade level openings, and building assignments.
- N. Work with building principals to pair mentors and novices, ideally in same buildings and grade level or content area.
- O. Research and apply for additional sources of funding via grants, etc., as available.
- P. Maintain mentoring records.
- Q. Present to District Developmental Council and the Board of Education, if requested.
- R. Reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and works collaboratively with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and building principals.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTOR TEACHERS

Mentors are perceived as leaders by their peers and throughout the organization. They assume a variety of roles in their relationships with novice teachers. Mentors work to establish professional and trusting relationships with their novice teachers in which honesty, risk taking, and self-reflection can result in mutual personal and professional growth. Mentors need to make an initial two-year commitment to the program.

Responsibilities of mentors are:

- A. To demonstrate instructional techniques to achieve higher levels of proficiency (i.e. *Dimensions of Learning*).
- B. To share teaching strategies and/or information about the instructional process.
- C. To model professionalism (i.e. collegiality with peers, continuing professional development, empathetic listening and sharing experiences).
- D. To give guidance and ideas related to disciplining students, scheduling, planning, organizing the school day, and communicating with parents.
- E. To model and encourage self-reflection and analysis.
- F. To assist in the interpretation and application of curriculum and assessments.
- G. To link the novice to appropriate resources, both human and material (i.e. arranging opportunities to observe models of sound instructional practice).
- H. To act as a liaison between department/grade level chairs and the novice teacher.
- I. To share information related to school and/or District policies and procedures.
- J. To assist in arranging, organizing, and analyzing the physical setting of the classroom.
- K. To meet and conference with the novice on a regular basis.
- L. To participate in triad meetings with the administrator and the novice teacher.
- M. To attend monthly mentor meetings and participate in new teacher orientation.
- N. To advise novice teachers when difficulties arise.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NOVICE TEACHERS

Novices, as participants in this mentoring relationship, have a set of roles and responsibilities to fulfill also. First, they are learners—honing their craft in the classroom, continuously developing their own teaching styles, and enhancing their students' learning. Like their mentors, they are also teachers who bring knowledge of new and proven instructional practices to their colleagues.

Responsibilities of the novice are:

- A. To work toward implementation and competence of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Principles (INTASC) [Appendix C].
- B. To generate, with support of the mentor and through the professional collaboration of the triad process, goals for the mentoring school year.
- C. To participate in at least two triad meetings.
- D. To attend new teacher orientation training.
- E. To participate in a variety of professional development opportunities (i.e. visitations, workshops, training sessions, new teacher meetings, etc.)
- F. To complete *Dimensions of Learning* training.
- G. To complete a needs assessment.
- H. To analyze and reflect upon teaching practice.
- I. To meet and conference with the mentor on a regular basis.
- J. To attend triad meetings with the mentor and an administrator at least twice a year.
- K. To observe the mentor and/or other colleagues.
- L. To request assistance proactively.
- M. To remain open and responsive to feedback.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL AND OTHER ADMINISTRATORS**

Positive relationships between administrators, mentors, and novice teachers are key to a successful probationary period as well as long-term professional success. The relationship that develops between administrators and mentors can also have a positive impact on the entire culture of the building and the District. Key to the relationship between administrators, novices, and mentors are professionalism and trust.

Principals, assistant principals, and other District administrators will: participate in mentor selection; facilitate the assignment of mentor/novice pairings, participate in mentoring triad meetings at least once each semester; support mentoring as an integral means to school success; assist with the scheduling of mentoring programs; and assist in the design of mentor/novice schedules.

## **MENTORING PROGRAM ANNUAL EVALUATION/ HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP**

Although the Advisory Board will review the progress and facilitate the improvement of the Mentoring Program throughout the year, it is necessary to perform an annual evaluation.

It is highly recommended that the annual evaluation of the Mentoring Program be administered through an outside organization, preferably a university of higher education. Using an external evaluator may allow for more assurance to respondents of the confidentiality of their input. It may also lend greater credibility and reliability to the evaluation process. The development of an evaluative program will be a collaborative effort between the Program Coordinator, the Advisory Board, and a university of higher education.

## **MENTORING PROGRAM COORDINATOR SELECTION COMMITTEE**

### **A. CONSISTS OF:**

1. FCTA President or designated representative
2. Three faculty members (elementary, middle, and high school) appointed by the FCTA
3. Three administrators (elementary, middle, and high school) appointed by the District
4. Assistant Superintendent for Personnel

### **B. FUNCTION:**

1. Review applications for Mentoring Program Coordinator
2. Interview Mentoring Program Coordinator candidates
3. Recommend Mentoring Program Coordinator candidate to the Superintendent of Schools

## **MENTORING PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD**

### **A. CONSISTS OF:**

1. Mentoring Program Coordinator
2. Three faculty members (elementary, middle, and high school) appointed by the FCTA
3. Three administrators (elementary, middle, and high school) appointed by the District
4. Assistant Superintendent for Personnel

### **B. FUNCTION:**

1. Interview and recommend mentors to the Superintendent
2. Review and approve the program budget prior to the presentation to the Board of Education
3. Oversee annual Mentoring Program evaluation

## **COMPENSATION FOR MENTORS**

Teachers functioning as mentors in the Mentoring Program will receive a stipend of \$1,000.00 in addition to their regular yearly salary for each novice teacher.