

USD469 Teacher/Specialist Mentoring

PURPOSE OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM:

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, nearly one-third of new teachers leave the profession in their first three years of teaching and approximately one-half of them leave by their fifth year in the profession (Keigher, pg 3).

The USD 469 Mentoring program is designed to give teachers new to the profession and/or new to our district individualized support. This support is designed to be positive and non-evaluative.

Top Five Reasons for New Teachers Leaving the Profession (Smolin, 1)

5. BURNOUT

4. THREAT OF LAYOFFS

3. LOW WAGES

2. TESTING PRESSURE

1. POOR WORKING CONDITIONS

GOALS OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM:

- USD 469 will retain the quality teachers we have hired.
- The transition from theory to practice will be made easier.
- The stress of a new career with all its challenges will be lessened.
- District policy and building regulations will be more easily relayed to the new teacher.
- A positive relationship will be formed that can be built on.
- Collaboration between teachers will be encouraged.
- A resource person will be readily available for the new teacher.
- Experienced teachers will be able to provide service to the profession by encouraging the growth of new teachers.
- Experienced teachers will grow through their interaction and collaboration with those new to the profession.

Qualities of an Effective Mentor:

EFFECTIVE MENTORS DO :

Provide Choices
Encourage
Support
Build confidence
Listen Respectfully
Extend Thinking and Options
Provide Information and Feedback to Mentees

EFFECTIVE MENTORS DO NOT:

Give Advice Unless Asked
Criticize
Judge
Rescue
Build Barriers
Dismiss Options
Evaluate

Mentor Training

Thorough and consistent training of mentors is a key to the success of the program. Mentor training will include the following information. It will be coordinated between administration and teacher representatives.

- Address the mentor's role
- Strategies for building relationships with new teachers
- Skills for observation of new teacher's practice, assessment of needs of new teacher, strategies to address those needs
- Coaching language and practice
- Guide new teachers to use reflection in their practice
- Focus instruction and differentiate for student needs
- Guiding new teachers in collecting and analyzing various types of student data to show evidence of learning
- Guiding new teachers in their use of content standards when planning lessons/units
- Using the professional education standards as a measure of assessing teacher practice

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR

Relationship Building:

Mentoring goes beyond a simple orientation to a new building or conveying job expectations. The mentor's role does not end after school begins. Indeed, it is just beginning. Being a mentor is multifaceted and challenging. A mentor should become a support system for the new teacher for the entire school year. Hopefully a relationship will be built that will continue beyond the official mentoring duties. A mentor is expected to accept the new teacher without judgment. The growth of the new teacher as a professional should be paramount. The mentor teacher should provide instructional support. The emotional wellbeing of the new teacher should also be considered. The mentor should encourage the new teacher as well as be an advocate for him/her. A careful balance between advocacy and rescuing should be maintained, however. Helping the new teacher understand the school community as well as expectations of that community is part of this growth. This should always be done in a positive manner. The mentor should always remember that a positive experience during this first year can help our district build and retain a strong teacher for our students.

Collaboration:

Collaboration is essential for a mentoring relationship to be successful. Questions may arise both during and after the duty day. As such, it is necessary for the mentor to be available to the mentee both during and after the teachers' duty day. A timeline is provided to outline other expectations such as reviewing building procedures, grade book assistance, lesson plan expectations, reviewing the evaluation process, etc. This timeline will also help the mentee chart some of the expectations and events that will occur during the year. This list is not all inclusive and reflects the minimum expectations. It may be modified if necessary. Much of what a mentored teacher will do will be determined by the needs of the mentee. Frequent contact and conversations are necessary for a successful relationship between the mentor and mentee to be forged.

Confidentiality:

To have a successful mentor/mentee relationship there must be trust. As such, it is essential that confidentiality be respected between the teachers. Release time will be provided for the mentor to do a minimum of two classroom observations. This time should be requested through the building principal. The mentor should remember at all times, however, that his/her role is *not* to evaluate the new teacher. All observations should be

used as teaching tools for improvement and information should never be shared with others. All documentations and/or notes should be used only to disseminate necessary information to the mentee and are confidential. To be useful, immediate feedback should be given to the mentee when he/she is observed. A mentor/mentee may find it useful to observe the mentor's classroom. If a mentee observes a mentor's classroom, time should be set aside to discuss the event.

As a mandatory reporter, however, confidentiality may be breached if there is a situation in which there is a:

- risk of harm to oneself
- risk of harm to another
- suspicion of child abuse

Criteria for Mentor Selection:

To become a mentor one must:

- have been a licensed teacher at USD 469 for at least three consecutive years.
- have demonstrated strong teaching ability based on the approved teachers' evaluation process.
- be recognized by his/her administrator and teachers as a skilled practitioner.
- be cooperative and empathetic.
- respect the confidentiality of the mentor/mentee relationship.
- be in close proximity to the new teacher.
- be willing to spend extra time to assist the new teacher.
- complete an application for the mentor program.
- complete the district mentor training program.

Re-assignment:

In the event that a mentor/mentee relationship does not prove a positive for either party, it may be necessary to replace a mentor. The mentor or mentee should contact the building principal or program director if this happens and a new mentor will be found.

Daily Impromptu Interactions/ Weekly Communication

Although formal meetings do not need to happen every day, the mentor should make an attempt to have some form of contact daily. This can be as small a gesture as stopping by to say good morning or checking in after school to see how your mentee's day has gone. This contact will obviously help the mentor/mentee relationship as well as stave off any problems. Remember, as someone new not only to the profession but to the area your mentee is likely to feel isolated. The Kansas Professional Education Standards will be topics of discussion for ongoing support for mentees. Please see the document for details on learner development, learning differences, learning environment, content knowledge, application of content, assessment, planning for instruction, instructional strategies, professional learning and ethical practice, and leadership and collaboration.

Parent Contact Events

Parent contact events can be intimidating for anyone new to the profession. Open House, Meet the Teacher Night and Parent/Teacher conferences are routine for experienced teachers. These events will require special attention from the mentor before they occur. The mentor should plan time to talk with your mentee about what to expect. Be positive. Explain to them the schedule and what the expectations are from the building administrator. Make sure that they know such simple things that we all take for granted such as if they should expect dinner. Remember, this will most likely be your mentees first time for all of these events. After the event make time to debrief your mentee and address any concerns or problems they may have encountered. Use this as a time to reinforce the importance of communication and positive contact with parents.

Tips for Parent Teacher Conferences (excerpted from “Parent/Teacher Conference Preparation”, NEA)

1. If possible, include the child in the conference. If you need to critique him on behaviors, performance or study habits, he is right there ready to help make a plan to correct. If all you have is praise, it's great for the child to hear you sing!
2. Be prepared. Have some anecdotal notes, test results, work samples, and so forth to present and discuss in a concrete way, rather than vague references.
3. Ask the parent to bring you up to speed on past school years' performance.
4. Be positive and focused on plans to correct any problems you and the parents and/or student agree upon. Be as specific as you can if you have ideas for implementing help. This may include specific plans about how you and the parent will keep in touch in the ensuing weeks. In short, what can the parent expect you to do to report progress on any new tactics? Be wary of overburdening yourself with constant written reports or phone calls. Don't forget you have other students, too!
5. Recruit the parent by impressing on him that you are a team. This may include suggesting that he take certain responsibilities in helping his student, too, such as monitoring, checking over work, or even signing daily or weekly reports from you.
6. Reflect on the child, not on defending yourself or your policies. Center on how he can best mesh with classroom rules and procedures that are in place.
7. Be sure the parent knows what to expect as far as progress reports from you throughout the year.
8. Give contact information to the parent if he has concerns.
9. Start and end with something positive about the child, even if you have to dig to think of things.

Observations

Mentors are expected to observe their mentees three times during the year. Ideally this will be done at least once each semester. Remember the role of the mentor is as a support for the mentee, not as an evaluator of his/her performance.

Pre-observation conferences

A pre-observation conference is necessary to not just set the time and date of the observation. Even though the mentee may not acknowledge this, it will be hard for the mentee to not feel as if they are being judged. That feeling should be acknowledged during the pre-conference and the mentee should be reassured that that this observation is being used to assist the mentee in looking closely at their teaching. This observation should be a positive experience for the mentee, even if there is a need to discuss deficits.

Post-observation conferences

This conference should happen as soon as possible after the observation. Conversations should be centered around encouraging the instructional growth of the mentee.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEW TEACHER

The new teacher needs to show mutual respect and engage in the process of mentoring. The ability to seek support on a regular basis from mentor and other colleagues will be vital to the growth process. The depth of conversations between the new teacher and mentor is a two-way street that will need to be lead by both at different times in the year. Open honest communication will make the team-based problem solving possible.

New teachers will document observations throughout the year. Pre and Post observation information should be shared between mentor and mentee. Logs of meeting should be kept by the new teacher and submitted to administration monthly.

DUTIES OF BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR

The building administrator has the responsibility of selecting mentors from the application process. He/She must verify that the candidate meets the criteria for mentor selection mentioned earlier. In addition, every effort to match suitable mentors with mentees will be the duty of the building principal. Logistically pairing like grade levels and/or subjects is a consideration. The principal should try to match appropriate personalities as well as subject areas. The building administrator should monitor the mentor process and supply support to the mentor when needed. At times release time will be necessary so that the mentor/mentee may be observed. The Principal should grant these requests whenever it is possible. The principal is responsible for conveying the building expectations as well as the general protocol to be followed in the building. The mentor may be used as a support to reinforce and re-inform the mentee throughout the year. In case rare case of a problem or conflict between a mentor and mentee a principal may ask a mentor to step down from their role. Monthly updates on the program should be given to the Assistant Superintendent. At the end of the year the principals will be surveyed along with the mentors/mentees to evaluate the New Teacher Mentor Program.

Kansas State Standards and Criteria for New Teacher Mentoring

Standard I: Mentor programs have a clear purpose and specified goals which reflect best practices.

Criteria:

1. The purpose statement describes why the mentor program exists (need) and states how the program is aligned with standards II-VI.
2. Goals state how the purpose of the program will be achieved.

Standard II: Mentor programs are organized to provide probationary teachers with professional support and continuous assistance.

Criteria:

1. The program prepares mentors through training and on-going support activities.
2. Mentor teachers must be on-site.
3. The program includes time for structured and/or planned contacts between the mentor and probationary teacher.
4. The program defines expectations of administrators and explains how administrators at the building and district level support the mentor program.
5. The program includes a year-long description of regular sequenced activities.
6. The program supports other district initiatives.
7. The program includes a process for mentor matching and a mechanism for re-assignment if the mentor is unable to fulfill the responsibilities.
8. The program ensures confidentiality between the mentor and probationary teacher.

Standard III: Mentor selection purposefully matches the best qualified mentor with a probationary teacher.

Criteria:

1. The mentor teachers must be a certificated teacher who has completed at least three consecutive school years of employment in the school district.
2. Participation by the mentor teacher must be voluntary.
3. The mentor teacher will be selected by the district and approved by the local school board based on the following criteria: (1) demonstrates exemplary teaching ability as measured by the district appraisal system and (2) exhibits qualities of an effective mentor as noted in the resource notebook.
4. The mentor must be matched with a probationary teacher based on the most appropriate combination of the following: *endorsement, grade level, proximity*.
5. The mentor teacher may provide assistance and guidance to not more than two probationary teachers.

Standard IV: Mentor programs result in professional growth of the mentor and probationary teacher.

Criteria:

1. The program establishes on-going mentor professional development that addresses the developmental stages of the probationary teacher, roles and responsibilities of the mentor, coaching-observation-feedback, relationship building and collaboration strategies.

2. The program establishes on-going professional development and support for the probationary teacher that addresses their individual needs.
3. The program provides professional development to administrators and other staff members regarding their roles in supporting the probationary teacher.
4. The program aligns with other professional development initiatives.

Standard V: Mentors have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Criteria:

1. The mentor participates in on-going training
2. The mentor collaborates with and supports the probationary teacher during on-going structured and unstructured contact time.
3. The mentor builds a positive relationship with the probationary teacher(s).
4. The mentor respects confidentiality of the mentor/probationary teacher relationship.
5. The mentor models, coaches, observes and provides feedback.
6. The mentor documents activity participation.
7. The mentor advocates for the probationary teacher by providing direct assistance on situational issues.

Standard VI: Mentor programs establish a local program evaluation process in addition to the submission of requested KSDE data.

Criteria:

1. The evaluation assesses achievement of specified program goals. (Standard I)
2. The evaluation assesses the effectiveness of program organization in providing professional support and continuous assistance to the probationary teacher. (Standard II)
3. The evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the mentor selection and the matching process. (Standard III).
4. The evaluation assesses the impact of the mentor program on the professional growth of the mentor and probationary teacher. (Standard IV).
5. The evaluation assesses the degree to which mentors fulfilled roles and responsibilities. (Standard V).

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR NEW STAFF

I, _____, understand that any proceedings with my assigned (new educator) mentor and I will be kept confidential. I understand that any dialogue that takes place with my assigned mentor is confidential between myself and my mentor and that the purpose of our proceedings is to provide feedback for professional growth. All documents created during observations done by my mentor are my property and may not be shared outside of the mentor/mentee relationship. Any violations to this Confidentiality Agreement may be punishable according to the statutes of the state of Kansas, to include civil litigation.

New Staff Member Signature

Date

This form is to remain on file at the district office. A copy may be given to the Lansing Education Association upon their request.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR MENTORS

I, _____, agree that any proceedings between my assigned (mentee) new teacher and I will be kept confidential between myself and the mentee. I understand that the district and/or teachers' association may not call on me to testify in the dismissal or disciplinary process for my assigned new teacher, except as required by Kansas state law. Any violations to this Confidentiality Agreement may be punishable according to the statutes of the state of Kansas, to include civil litigation.

Mentor Signature

Date

This form is to remain on file at the district office. A copy may be given to the Lansing Education Association upon their request.

Works Cited

Bonfilio, Judy. "Parent/Teacher Conference Preparation". NEA. 10 October 2008. Web. 24 June 2012.

Kansas State Department of Education. "Mentoring Program Standards and Criteria". 19 June 2008. Web. 24 June 2012.

Keigher, A. *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results From the 2008–09 Teacher Follow-up Survey* (NCES 2010-353). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. 2010. Web. 21 June 2012.

Smolin, Melanie. "Five Reasons Teacher Turnover is on the Rise". *Take Part*. 9 August 2011. Web. 24 June 2012.

USD 469 MENTOR/MENTEE Meeting Summary Form

Directions

At the end of each meeting:

Complete the Individual Meeting Form. Review topics and/or Conversation Points to select a focus for the next meeting.

Monthly submit Meeting summary form to your building principal for signature. They should then be forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent.

Mentor Name _____

Mentee Name _____

Building _____

Date _____

Summarize the meetings held this month by listing at least 3 Key Points from Discussion.

Points	Hours	Initials

Examples of Key Points that may be covered:

Make appointments for weekly meetings. Mark these dates on your calendars.

Discuss the USD469 evaluation process.

Discuss the USD469 Professional Development Goals.

Help develop mentees professional development goals.

Review curriculum and share insights gained in the first year of teaching that will impact planning for the upcoming year.

Help design an effective unit plan and discuss student outcomes, potential challenges, how to differentiate, etc.

Discuss what the standard look and sound like in classrooms.

USD 469 MENTOR/MENTEE Individual Meeting Summary Form

Does not have to be submitted, this is for your records.

Mentor Name _____

Mentee Name _____

Building _____

Date _____

Summarize the meetings held this month by listing at least 3 Key Points from Discussion.

Points	Hours	Initials
Next meeting Notes....		

Examples of Key Points that may be covered:

- Make appointments for weekly meetings. Mark these dates on your calendars.
- Discuss the USD469 evaluation process.
- Discuss the USD469 Professional Development Goals.
- Help develop mentees professional development goals.
- Review curriculum and share insights gained in the first year of teaching that will impact planning for the upcoming year.
- Help design an effective unit plan and discuss student outcomes, potential challenges, how to differentiate, etc.
- Discuss what the standard look and sound like in classrooms.

Classroom And Building Procedures

Items	Notes
Posted Rules	
Emergency Exit Signs	
Bulletin Boards	
Student Desks and Tables	
Your Teacher Area: Teacher Computer, etc. Teacher Textbooks, etc. Storage Areas	
Teacher Materials: Skyward Lesson Plans	
Shared Building Resources: Copiers Lamination Office Resources Library	
Beginning Class Procedures: Attendance Admit Slips Tardy Students Lunch Counts	
Other Procedures: Nurse Students attending Special Classes Students with IEP requirements Supervision	
End of Day Procedures: Dismissal procedures Custodial Securing Classroom Teacher Dismissal	

Student Policies

	Items	Notes
	Attendance	
	Discipline	
	Makeup Work	
	Medication	
	Emergency Procedures	
	Homework Policy	
	Cell Phone Policy	
	Hall Conduct	
	Hall Passes	
	Dress Code	
	Food, Gum, Candy, Drinks	
	Hallway Signs	
	Suspension	
	Student Handbook	

Teacher Policies

	Items	Notes
	Parking	
	Leave	
	Mail Boxes	
	Classroom/Office Communication	
	Email	
	Technology Usage	
	Field Trips	
	Requisitions	
	Purchasing Cards	
	Use of School Car	
	Use of School Facilities	
	Extra Duties	
	Teaching Handbook	
	Community Values	
	Educational Importance	
	Socio-economic	
	Values	
	Problems	

SELF-SURVEY: SHOULD I BECOME A MENTOR?

Becoming a mentor is a time intensive and challenging role. This checklist is designed to help you decided if you are ready. Please place a checkmark in the column that represents the degree to which the statement characterizes the way you see yourself.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I enjoy working with other professionals.					
2. I am a good listener					
3. I respect my colleagues.					
4. I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.					
5. I want to contribute to the professional development of others and share what I have learned.					
6. I find reward in service to someone who needs my assistance.					
7. I am able to support and help without taking charge within a professional framework.					
8. I am willing to adjust my schedule to meet the needs of others.					
9. I am confident and secure in my knowledge and try to remain up-to-date.					
10. I use a variety of teaching methods to enhance student learning.					
11. Others look to me for information about subject matter and methods of teaching.					
12. Overall, I see myself as a competent professional.					
13. I use my strengths to support my colleagues.					
14. I am able to explain things at various levels of complexity and detail.					
15. Others are interested in my professional ideas.					
16. I am familiar with and use the Kansas State Standards in my teaching.					
17. I seek out others who are positive about our profession.					
Total the number of checks in each column					