

School District 148
State Approved Induction/Mentor Program

#1 Provide a brief general overview of the program.

District 148 believes that mentoring is the process by which practicing members of the teaching profession who have demonstrated excellence in the profession and can, with training, share that expertise with others. We view mentoring as a win-win situation when adequate preparation is given to mentoring program practices and processes. Hence, our Induction/Mentor Program is dedicated to offering mentor support to our teachers to enhance the instruction in the district through the help and advice provided by peers. Through our Induction/Mentoring Professional Development Program, we will aim to establish one-on-one relationships between mentor teachers and all newly hired teachers. Teachers new to the profession will receive the assistance of a mentor during the first two years of employment, while those who have taught before, but are new to our district, receive the same assistance for a one year. As part of our program, all new teachers receive support as follows: Initial three-day orientation to the district and profession, mentor assignments, staff development workshops, peer coaching, release time for pre-conference, observation, post-conference, a mentor handbook, and monthly meetings with all new teachers and the Induction/Mentor Coordinator. The program provides a way for the new teacher to identify his or her teaching strengths and areas for growth on a developmental cycle of plan, teach, reflect, and apply.

#2 Describe the formal mechanism that will be used to orient new teachers to the district, the local school improvement and professional development plans, and the employer's expectations with regard to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and content-area standards applicable to the new teacher's area of certification.

The Induction/Mentor Program affords the District an opportunity to recognize and reward some of the many outstanding teachers within the district, while easing the new teacher's entry into the system. Our Induction/Mentor Program is designed to encourage those experienced tenured teachers to share their knowledge, talents, and skills with teachers new to the District, but it does not supplement district and building orientation. The formal mechanism for orienting new teachers to the SIP and Professional Development Plans occur in various places. They are: (1) Mentor/Mentee training sessions throughout the school year that cover these topics. (2) Mentor/Mentee sessions held throughout the year that highlight the use of technology in the classroom with a particular focus on content-area standards and their application to planning preparation and instruction. (3) SIP plans are shared at the building level and are an integral part of the mentor/mentee relationship. Professional Development plan information is shared initially during New Teacher Orientation and is ongoing throughout the school year. The LPDC Committee is primarily responsible for providing specific guidance aimed at helping new teachers meet performance standards for continued certification. The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards are introduced during mentoring and used as a constant way of helping new teachers reflect on their practice as they align with the *PATHWISE* Induction Program. Each new teacher is given a copy of the District Content Standards as well as the Illinois Standards, and they are referenced throughout the mentoring program.

#3 Describe how the new teacher will be provided at least one opportunity per semester to participate in

- professional development that involves observing experienced teachers and discussing with them aspect of their teaching practices; and/or
- workshops, conferences, symposia, seminars, or other similar training events designed to increase their knowledge and skills.

Because we realize that new teachers require the highest level of support in the very beginning of the year, for the first semester our District provides financial resources to provide new teachers with release time of one-half hour per week to be observed by their mentor teacher or to observe experienced teachers. In the subsequent semesters, depending on need, the release time tapers off to a minimum of one-hour per month. The mentor teachers are responsible for facilitating the observations so that the new teachers can witness different examples of quality teaching. During formal monthly meetings, round table discussions are held with the District Induction /Mentor Coordinator, and periodically the teacher mentors, to discuss IPTS Framework. Such information is designed to increase teachers' knowledge and skills with respect to the IPTS. Additionally, the District offers professional development opportunities based on the District's values, policies and instructional goals. The Induction/Mentor Coordinator highlights the use of technology to improve instruction and student learning revolving around content area standards that apply to the teachers' area of certification or assignment.

#4 Describe the planned ratio of teachers to mentors (no more than 5-1 per school year) and any special characteristics of the mentoring arrangement (e.g., use of electronic mentors, group mentoring sessions, etc.)

District 148 has been extremely successful with a teacher/mentor ratio of 1:1 teaching the same grade, with an occasional instance of 2:1. Our program is designed for the first year mentor to continue as the second year mentor, whenever possible. Mentors and mentees communicate in myriad ways that include, but are not limited to, face-to-face meetings, email, grade level meetings, lunch periods and during planned observations.

#5 Describe how the program will provide for systematic opportunities for contact between the mentor and the new teacher and how such contact supports the teacher both professionally and socially in the school environment.

Every effort is made to match mentors with mentees in the same building and in the same department/grade level. With such matches, support is available quite readily to encourage professional and social integration in our school environment. Mentor and mentees meet during lunch periods, planning periods, before school, after school, periodic monthly meetings, Induction/Mentor Professional Development Workshops, and weekly release days in order to have professional and social contact with one another. The mentors and new teachers will first have a pre-conference, and then jointly select a time for observation, a class and a focus, and the mentor arranges for the "Facilitator" to release him/her for observation. Additionally, the mentors and new teachers will meet before, after, or during school to have a post-conference. All observations are formative, interactive, collaborative and done for the sole purpose of guiding future development.

#6 Describe plan for implementing the required sequence of three observations, including preparation with the teacher, observation, and feedback.

The mentor and mentee will meet before school, after school, during preparation/planning periods and/or lunch periods to discuss the focus of the lesson to be observed and the specific needs of the mentee. The mentor lowers the mentee's level of concern by clarifying the purpose of the observation (to use evidence of student learning and teacher practice to help identify areas of strength and for growth). The goal is always to reinforce good instructional practice and to discuss the perceptions of the mentee. Careful attention is paid to the specific IPTS that will be observed. Mentors and mentees will discuss the areas of concern to be

focused on and that will be reflected on in the post-observation. Both, pre- and post-conferences and observations are modeled after *Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Enhancement of Professional Practice*.

#7 Describe plans and specific activities that will be used by the mentor for review and analysis of the new teachers' written documentation of assignments, assessment instruments and samples of student work for at least two lessons.

EVENT THREE of the *PATHWISE* Induction Program is a "profile of practice" which involves the preparation of an instruction plan, developing a lesson(s), an observation, reflection on the lesson and collection of evidence of student learning and assessments. While the new teacher chooses the direction for this EVENT, the mentor assists and guides the process. Additionally, the mentor will review and analyze the new teacher's lesson plans, student assignments, assessment instruments, evaluation tools, and communication tools for a minimum of two lessons. This will be done in a manner consistent with the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation cycle. The skills taught during the observation cycle will be employed and reflective teaching techniques will be reinforced through instruction at the large group mentor meetings held monthly.

#8 Describe the plan and specific activities that will be used to demonstrate the professional expertise of the new teacher in reflecting on his or her own practice, particularly the teaching that was observed per this plan.

In most of the EVENTS of the *PATHWISE* Induction Program, there is a reflection form that the new teacher will complete. The role of the mentor is to collaboratively guide the new teacher through the process of reflecting on his/her practice and establishing a plan by which to improve. In addition to meeting the *PATHWISE* requirements, the mentee will maintain a Reflection Contact Log outlining interaction with the mentor as it relates to IPTS and their specific area of certification/teaching assignment. The Reflection Contact Log allows the mentor teacher to participate in formative assessment of the mentee. The mentors will offer written feedback on the reflections.

MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#9 Describe the criteria and process that will be used for mentor selection.

The mentor selection process includes, but is not limited to the following: 1. The District Induction/Mentor Coordinator will send all certified district staff holding a standard teaching certificate a letter of opportunity and a mentor application, 2. Each applicant will submit a letter of interest detailing their genuine concern for the task of mentoring and art of teaching and their commitment to build, nurture and maintain an intentional working relationship with new teachers, 3. A letter of recommendation from a colleague which speaks to their teacher excellency, implementation of best practices, exceptional communication skills and professionalism, and 4. A letter of recommendation from the principal. The Induction/Mentor Professional Development Team will then use the above information to select building mentors and match them with the new teachers. After acceptance into the Induction/Mentor Program, the mentor is then required to attend intense induction/mentor training sessions throughout the year. Principals are consulted for all matches.

#10 Describe the formal training program for mentors and show how it will address each of the following areas:

- **content knowledge and pedagogy;**
- **adult learning theory;**
- **attributes and styles of positive critiques;**
- **classroom observation skills related to assessment of performance;**
- **strategies for providing constructive feedback and social support;**
- **problem-solving skills; and**
- **formative assessment and self-assessment.**

Each mentor teacher is required to attend 5 days of Charlotte Danielson Mentor Training as well as training and mentor certification through our Intermediate Service Center (ISC4). The trainings will provided information, discussions and reflections on the following topics: 1. Goals of mentoring, 2. Types of mentoring, 3. Styles of mentoring, 4. Phases of first year teacher development, 5. Categories and types of support, 6. Profiles of successful new teachers, 7. Case studies and role-playing geared toward problem-solving, constructive feedback, and positive critiques, and 8. A thorough overview of IPTS. They will also use a variety of teaching tools that include but are not limited to videos, handouts, and best practice research.

#11 Describe the role and responsibilities of the mentors within the proposed program.

The mentors in our Induction/Mentor Program serve the new teachers as: 1. Peer coaches, 2. Advocates, 3. Trusted listeners, 4. Providers of classroom management and instruction techniques, 5. Assistants with lesson planning and preparation, 6. Reflective teaching partners, 7. Guide and support for implementing IPTS and IPLS, 8. Problem-solver, 9. Building and district policy informant, 10. Social support, and 11. A non-evaluative/judgmental partner. The mentors will be responsible for setting up a sequence of sessions with a minimum of three observations, preparing the new teacher prior to the classroom observation (pre-conference), observing the new teacher's teaching practice, and providing feedback, suggestions, and techniques after the observation (post-conference). The mentor is also responsible for providing, in writing: 1. Feedback after observation and an analysis of the teacher's written reflections on his or her teaching practices focusing on relevant IPTS and the content-area standards that apply to their assignments, and 2. Areas of certification and to issues identified in the feedback from the mentor teacher for each quarter of a school year. Additionally, the mentor must fulfill the obligations of the Induction/Mentoring Program with first and second year staff, completing and maintaining all required paperwork, satisfying contact hours with each new teacher assigned to them, attending required mentor meetings, and providing feedback to the Induction/Mentor Coordinator.

#12 Describe how mentors will be assigned to new teachers and how they will, to the extent possible, hold the same certificate as the new teachers with whom they will work.

Currently, we have made successful efforts to match mentors with mentees in the same building, the same department/grade level, holding the same certificate. With such matches, support is available quite readily to encourage professional and social integration in our school environment. Principals are consulted for all matches.

#13 Describe how responsibility for coordination of the induction and mentoring program will be assigned within the district and the name of the title of the person so assigned.

Responsibility for coordination of the induction and mentoring program is assigned to our District Induction/Mentor Coordinator. Currently, the position is held by Mrs. Maureen White. She oversees the program on a daily basis and reports to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. There is also an Induction/Mentor Professional Development Team who helps create professional development plans.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

#14 Describe the specific method(s) that will be used for collecting and maintaining data on the induction and mentoring program, including

- length of time new teachers remain employed as teachers (if known) or
- length of time new teachers remain employed as teachers in the district in which they were mentored;
- percentage of new teachers who were rated “satisfactory” or “excellent” each year since completing the program;
- cost-related savings of recruiting new teachers due to increased retention;
- decrease in the number or percentage of teachers teaching outside their respective fields.

The District Induction/Mentor Coordinator will maintain retention rate information for new teachers as they are employed in District 148. The Induction/Mentor Coordinator along with the Human Resource Department will determine the percentage of new teachers rating satisfactory or excellent upon program completion, in addition to monitoring any decrease in the number or percentage of teachers teaching outside their respective fields. The Assistant Superintendent’s office will determine the cost of recruiting new teachers due to increased retention.