Westfield Public Schools
Induction and Mentoring Program

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Westfield Public Schools’ Mentor Program is to assist teachers through ongoing collegial support in providing all students with educational opportunities that promote continuous learning, independent living, and participation as productive and responsible members of society.

Background and Purpose

Westfield Public School’s New Teacher Mentor Program began in 1998 as a pilot program at Westfield High School and has since expanded to include the entire district. Over ninety trained mentors, from all grade levels and most disciplines, are ready and willing to assist new teachers during their first year in the classroom. Since the inception of the mentor program, more than 200 new teachers have been mentored and the retention rate of these new teachers is over eighty percent. The number of new teachers will continue to grow due to addition and attrition and these new teachers must receive systematic and formal support to successfully integrate into the district and meet the expectations of our educational community.

Research indicates that beginning teachers (teachers in their first year of teaching), and new teachers (teachers new to a district), who participate in a mentoring program achieve a level of competence and comfort in their role in a single year that unsupported teachers do not reach for three to four years. Research has shown that thirty to forty percent of teachers who are placed in a classroom without mentoring support leave within the first two years. This number increases within a five-year period.

Westfield Public School’s is committed to supporting the success of all members of its community. As the number of new teachers continues to grow, it is imperative that we maintain the integrity and success of our learning environment. Establishing and maintaining a vibrant and ongoing mentoring process is a key component in the nurturing of our new faculty.
GOALS OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM

I. To integrate teachers new to Westfield into the culture of the school, district, and community

- New Teacher Orientation (August)
- School handbook, new teacher handbook, and other materials to assist in the acclimation process
- Social opportunities
- New teacher workshops and building specific meetings

II. To provide professional development in classroom strategies and best practices for beginning teachers

- New Teacher Workshops topics may include:
  - Classroom Management
  - Planning and Assessment
  - Curriculum/Massachusetts Frameworks
  - Parent Communication
  - Time Management

III. To enhance the new teacher’s personal and professional development, enabling them to gain comfort, confidence and instructional competence through the establishment of mentor/new teacher relationships

- Mentors will introduce new teachers to colleagues and lead them to important resources throughout the building and the district.
- Mentors and new teachers will meet regularly to discuss new teacher practice and challenges.
- Mentors and new teachers will work collaboratively sharing and implementing new ideas and reflecting upon their effectiveness.
- Mentors and new teachers will participate in observations of each other and/or other colleagues in the building/district.

IV. To attract and retain highly qualified and experienced teachers

- Principals and other administrators in interviewing positions will inform teacher candidates of Westfield’s mentoring program.
- District Coordinator will maintain records of acquisition and attrition of new teachers.
- All constituents will contribute to the on-going assessment and enhancement of the mentoring program.
- The district will continue to attract, support and compensate highly qualified and competent teachers to become mentors.
Mentoring Vocabulary

*Beginning Teacher* – A brand new educator who has little or no previous paid classroom experience.

*New Teacher* – An educator with at least two or more years of paid professional education experience, but who is newly hired in the district.

**Mentee** – A beginning or new teacher who is working with a mentor

**Mentor** – The title and status applied to a person who assumes primary responsibility to provide mentoring. The mentor is more experienced and, frequently, more senior person who works in a similar location and role as the mentee.

**Mentor Coordinator** – The title and status applied to a person who assumes primary responsibility for the coordination of mentoring procedures and activities in a specific building.

**District Mentor Coordinator** – The title and status applied to a person who assumes responsibility for the coordination of mentoring procedures and activities for the Westfield Public School District.

**Mentoring** – The complex developmental process mentors use to support and guide their mentees through the necessary transitions that are a part of learning how to be effective educators and career-long learners.

**Induction** – The activities and processes necessary to successfully induct a novice teacher into the profession. An effective induction program should include orientation, mentoring, and professional development specific to the mentee’s needs, observations, and peer support groups.

**Coaching** – The support for learning provided by a colleague who uses observation, data collection, and descriptive, non-judgmental reporting on specific requested behaviors and technical skills. The goal is to help an individual see his or her own patterns of behavior through someone else’s eyes and to prompt reflection, goal setting, and action to increase the desired results.

**Peer Observation** – Peer observation is the process by which a new teacher and/or mentor observe one another and/or other colleagues. Pre and post conferences should be held before and after the observation so expectations and reflections can be discussed. Peer observations are NOT evaluative.


*For the purpose of this guide, all beginning and new teachers will be referred to as “new teachers” unless a specific reason warrants a distinction.*
Activities of Westfield Public Schools’ Mentoring Program

Year One Mentor Program
All new teachers in the district who do not have a professional license in the area in which they are teaching, are assigned to the Year One Mentor Program. They are assigned a mentor in their school who teach the same grade or subject as much as possible (see Mentor/New Teacher Matching). They meet together weekly at first, then every other week as the year progresses. They also attend monthly, building-based meetings that address building procedures and upcoming events to prepare new teachers for these new experiences. Mentors use a form called the Collaborative Assessment Form to provide structure to the meetings and establish accountability by recording mentee and mentor next steps. The mentee records all meetings on a Year One Log and submits it to the District Mentor Coordinator at the end of the year.

Year Two Mentor Program
In 2009, the district added a second year of mentoring to meet the new state requirement for licensure of beginning teachers. The second year teachers are assigned to a group that meets monthly with a building mentor. The mentees read relevant articles, do observations, analyze student work and do a case study to address the needs of a struggling learner in their class. They are required to do fifty hours in the second year. Mentees are required to document all mentoring activities on a log form and submit it to the District Mentor Coordinator at the end of the year.

Mentor Application and Selection
A posting for mentors will be publicized during the spring for teachers to become trained in mentoring. An application must be completed on the district’s website and a principal recommendation must be received and sent to the Human Resource Office at 94 North Elm Street, Suite 101. Based upon the application, needs of the system and individual buildings, mentors will be selected and receive training.

Mentor Qualifications:
- A minimum of three years teaching experience
- Commitment to the professional growth of the self and new/beginning teachers
- Application and recommendation by building principal
- Completion of Westfield Public Schools’ mentor training program

Please note that not every trained mentor will be assigned a new teacher each year. Annual selection is based upon the needs of the district and specific buildings.

Mentor Training
Mentor training begins with a full day of training in the summer. Six additional hours of mentor training takes place in September or October. A refresher course is offered each fall for previously trained mentors to enhance their mentoring skills. The district coordinator along with other trained district facilitators provides all mentoring courses.

Mentor/New Teacher Matching
Mentors are paired with new teachers during the summer as new teachers are hired. By the end of the summer, mentors have been notified by building coordinators or principals who their
mentee is and, in many cases, the mentor will make contact with the mentee prior to the first day of school. Principals have the final decision of matching mentors with new teachers but should consult with their building coordinators and, if necessary, district coordinator. Matching is based upon the latest research that indicates the best pairing of new teachers and mentors adhering to the following guidelines:

- Same Grade Level and/or Subject Area
- Proximity in building
- Compatible schedules to allow for common prep periods and duties.

Principals are responsible for completing the mentor matching form (Appendix B) for each mentor/new teacher pairing and returning it to the building/grade level coordinator.

**New Teacher Orientation**
New teacher orientation is conducted the day before all teachers return to school. All new/beginning teachers and mentors are required to attend both the district and school specific activities. Orientation occurs at individual schools and is implemented by the building coordinators and mentors. It typically consists of an introduction of key staff members, a tour of the building, a review of critical information such as policies and procedures, time for the mentor and mentee, and a district luncheon given by the WEA. The goal is to make new teachers feel comfortable about their first week of school. The district has also begun offering an optional workshop for first year teachers that also seeks to prepare these “new to the profession” teachers for their first week of school.

**New Teacher/Mentor Individual Meetings**
It is expected that new teachers and mentors will meet on a regular basis throughout the school year. Mentors should keep a time log of all meetings according to the DOE mandate.

**Peer Observations**
It is expected that new teachers and mentors will make three observations during the year and complete a reflection form as documentation (Appendix C). Observations could include the mentee observing the mentor, the mentor observing the mentee or the new teacher and mentor observing a third teacher together. Observations should include a pre-conference meeting and a post-conference reflection. Substitutes will be provided if needed.

**New Teacher Seminars**
It is expected that all new teachers will attend the scheduled new teacher meetings throughout the year. General topics and discussion to be covered include, but are not limited to, classroom management, conducting parent conferences, time management, etc. An information sheet will be distributed at new teacher orientation.

**Mentor Workshops**
It is expected that all mentors attend scheduled meetings throughout the school year. General topics and discussion to be covered include, but are not limited to, conducting classroom observations, periodic evaluation of mentor/mentee relationships, assisting with problems, etc.
Mentor/New Teacher Meetings
It is expected that all mentors and new teachers will attend regularly scheduled building/grade level meetings. These meetings will address issues discussed in other forums and will follow building specific agendas.

Mentor Program Evaluations
Each summer, the District Mentor Coordinator writes a summary report of the mentoring program. Included in the report are: a list of all teachers and their mentors; the total amount of time spent in individual meetings with mentors, group meetings and observations; and a list of the current district mentors. In addition, data is collected from satisfaction surveys provided to the mentors and mentees and collated in the report. Information from the surveys is used to improve the program.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MENTORS

Knowledge and Characteristics:

- To be knowledgeable about the program’s requirements, including time commitments, training topics, and observational and conferencing techniques
- To be committed to the personal growth of new teachers
- To understand the needs of new teachers and the ways to guide their professional development
- To recognize that professional growth takes place not only in new teachers but also in the self as a mentor

Supportive Activities:

- To actively participate in new teacher orientation
- To provide professional, personal and instructional support on a day-to-day basis
- To meet formally on a weekly basis to determine needs and progress and offer support through active listening and by sharing teaching experiences and practices
- To keep a formal log of these meetings with regards to time and accomplishments (Appendix D)
- To participate in classroom observations and the reflection process
- To attend training sessions and ongoing meetings throughout the school year
- To establish and maintain professional respect and trust in the relationship
- To observe the code of confidentiality between mentor and new teacher

Assessment:

- To be involved in providing suggestions and feedback for mentor program enhancement

NEW and BEGINNING TEACHERS

Knowledge and Characteristics:

- To be knowledgeable about the goals of the mentoring program and its requirements
- To recognize mentoring as a positive experience
- To be receptive to mentor support

Supportive Activities:

- To participate in the orientation process in August
- To meet and conference regularly with mentor, new teachers, and other colleagues
- To keep a log of weekly meetings with mentor
- To attend new teacher seminars and building specific mentoring meetings
- To participate in the classroom observation process and reflect on own teaching
- To practice reflective teaching
- To be willing to share and try new ideas
- To observe the code of confidentiality between mentor and new teacher
Assessment:

- To be involved in providing suggestions and feedback for mentor program enhancement

**BUILDING/GRADE LEVEL COORDINATORS**

**Characteristics and Knowledge:**

- To understand the program’s requirements, such as the training, orientation, observations, conferencing, and ongoing peer support meetings
- To be committed to the personal growth of new teachers
- To be able to establish a collaborative relationship with all constituents, including mentors, new teachers, principals, building/grade level coordinators, the district coordinator, and central administration

**Supportive Activities:**

- To assist in the planning and facilitation of new teacher orientation in August
- To make time for frequent contact with the new teachers and mentors to understand their needs and to provide information and direction about the fostering relationship
- To ensure mentor/new teacher meetings are taking place and matches are compatible
- To play an active role in the new teachers’ support team
- To facilitate mentor/new teacher meetings on a monthly basis
- To promote the mentoring program to faculty, administration, and community
- To participate with building principals in the selection and matching process when possible
- To work with principals and mentors to coordinate substitutes for release time as needed
- To work with the district coordinator to meet the needs of the building with regards to supplies, information, materials, etc.
- To distribute and collect data tools of observations and overall program
- To observe the code of confidentiality between mentor and new teacher

Assessment:

- To be involved in providing suggestions and feedback for mentor program enhancement
- To attend school committee/central administration meetings as necessary to offer input

**DISTRICT COORDINATOR**

**Characteristics and Knowledge:**

- To understand the program’s requirements, such as the training, orientation, observations, conferencing, and ongoing peer support meetings
- To be committed to the personal growth of new teachers
- To be able to establish a collaborative relationship with all constituents, including mentors, new teachers, building/grade level coordinators, principals, and central administration
➢ To understand the needs of new teachers, mentors, the Westfield Public School System, and individual schools regarding mentoring and to be able to provide guidance and support to meet these needs

Supportive Activities:

➢ To plan, coordinate, oversee, and continuously improve the Mentor/New Teacher Induction Program and all related activities (i.e.: orientation, new teacher seminars, etc.)
➢ To work with all building coordinators to provide support for mentors and educators who are new to Westfield Public Schools
➢ To coordinate the efforts of all building mentoring programs by communicating with building coordinators, principals, and central office
➢ To provide mentor training and/or oversee mentor training professional development
➢ To provide and/or oversee professional development opportunities for new teachers
➢ To write or give input to any grant opportunities for the mentoring program
➢ To plan and implement all grant funded activities, if applicable
➢ To assist with arranging and monitoring all grant expenditures
➢ To assist in the creation of materials to assist principals, mentors, and new teachers in their mentoring endeavors
➢ To order materials and supplies relevant to the mentoring program
➢ To constantly communicate to the community the importance of mentoring in the training and retaining of new teachers
➢ To observe the code of confidentiality between mentor and new teacher

Assessment:

➢ To be involved in providing suggestions and feedback for mentor program enhancement
➢ To attend school committee/central administration meetings as necessary to offer input

PRINCIPALS

Characteristics and Knowledge:

➢ To become knowledgeable about the mentoring program and its benefits to the school
➢ To understand the needs of new mentors and new teachers and assist them in fulfilling their mentoring responsibilities
➢ To recognize that time is a crucial factor in the mentoring process and to schedule new teachers and mentors with this criteria in the forefront

Supportive Activities:

➢ To determine, with advice from building/grade level coordinators, the mentor matches, taking into consideration grade level, academic expertise, room proximity, and other factors that promote an effective mentoring relationship
➢ To be an active participant in the new teacher’s support team, including orientation
➢ To provide/inform mentor coordinators, mentors, and new teachers of professional development opportunities that assist new teachers and the mentoring process
➢ To facilitate public relations for the mentor program within the building and the entire school community
➢ To schedule time for participants to plan, observe, and conference
➢ To encourage excellent experienced teachers to become mentors
➢ To respect the confidentiality of the mentor/teacher relationship

Assessment:
➢ To be involved in providing suggestions and feedback for mentor program enhancement

**SUPERINTENDENT**

Knowledge and Characteristics:
➢ To be knowledgeable about the mentor program and its benefits to the school system
➢ To recognize the commitments of those people involved in the mentor program

Supportive Activities:
➢ To participate in the Westfield Public Schools’ Orientation Program
➢ To encourage and support the goals of the mentor program
➢ To provide/inform mentor coordinators, mentors, and new teachers of professional development opportunities that assist new teachers and the mentoring process
➢ To serve as advocate for the program to the community
➢ To propose budgets that provide funding to support the mentor program
➢ To ensure that administration takes an active role in each of their respective buildings
➢ To ensure compliance with contract and law
➢ To respect the confidentiality of the mentor/teacher relationship

Assessment:
➢ To be involved in providing suggestions and feedback for mentor program enhancement

**WESTFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

Knowledge and Characteristics:
➢ To be knowledgeable about the mentor program and its benefits to the school system
➢ To recognize that mentoring enhances the community’s support of the teaching profession

Supportive Activities:
➢ To participate in the Westfield Public Schools’ Orientation Program
➢ To make new members aware of its support of the program
➢ To inform new teachers about the role of the WEA including rights, responsibilities and benefits
➢ To provide/inform mentor coordinators, mentors, and new teachers of professional development opportunities that assist new teachers and the mentoring process
➢ To negotiate contractual language that will support the goals of the mentor program
➢ To use the MTA to lobby elected officials for financial support of mentoring
➢ To ensure compliance with the contract and law
➢ To respect the confidentiality of the mentor/teacher relationship

Assessment:
➢ To review evaluation processes and provide suggestions and feedback for program enhancement

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Knowledge and Characteristics:
➢ To be knowledgeable about the mentor program and its benefits to the school system

Supportive Activities:
➢ To negotiate contractual language that will support the goals of the mentor program
➢ To provide financial support through the budget process
➢ To express public support for the program
➢ To participate in the recognition of mentors and new teachers

Assessment:
➢ To allow time for reports to the school committee by mentors and new teachers
➢ To give feedback for program enhancement

**Mentor Program Assessment**

The quality and success of the Mentoring Program will be assessed on an on-going basis. The program’s success will be determined by the effect of the program on all participants.

The following are quantitative data that may be included in program assessment:

➢ Number of Participants
➢ Average hours per week of meeting time as reported in time logs
➢ Occurrences of observations between mentors and mentees
➢ Retention rate of new teachers

The following are qualitative data that may be gathered from opinion surveys:

➢ Achievement of professional goals from a professional and personal standpoint
➢ Adaptability of new teachers to the profession, school, and district
➢ Satisfaction of first year performance
➢ Student achievement as related to first year experience
➢ Sense of belonging and commitment to the city of Westfield
➢ Benefits received from the mentoring program
Teacher Evaluation

All teachers will be evaluated according to the provisions of the Agreement between the Westfield Education Association and the Westfield School Committee. The mentor will NOT participate in any way in the evaluation of new teachers.

Confidentiality

The mentor will not discuss performance of his/her new teacher with anyone, including school and district administrators, with the following exception: If the academic growth, social/emotional well being, or physical safety of students is at risk, an administrator must be notified.

The mentor teacher may discuss the new teacher’s performance, with the knowledge and approval of the new teacher, with resource professionals to provide opportunities for assistance in areas that need improvement.