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Dutchess County BOCES

Teacher Mentor Program

July 2006

Dutchess County BOCES Teacher Mentor Program

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Mentor Selection Committee Members	4
Role of a Mentor.....	5
Qualities of a Good Mentor.....	6
Mentor Application Process.....	7
Mentor Qualifications.....	7
Mentor Selection	7
Mentor Application Form	8
Mentor/Mentee Timeline & Checklist	9
Suggested Monthly Mentor/Mentee Activities	9
Annual Program Review	10
Activity Log	11
Mentee Survey.....	12

Introduction

The Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (8 NYCRR § 102.2 [dd]) were amended December 4, 2003 to require school districts and BOCES to include a mentoring program for new teachers in their professional development plans covering the time period February 2, 2004 and thereafter. Included within these regulations are the revised teacher certification requirements that also take effect February 2, 2004. These requirements mandate that initial teaching certificate holders complete three (3) years of satisfactory teaching, plus a mentored teaching experience within the first year of employment.

The purpose of the program is to meet the mandate as stated above and to provide peer guidance to new uncertified teachers to the BOCES. The program is designed to encourage experienced tenured teachers or retirees to share their knowledge, talents and skills with new teachers in the BOCES to become effective teachers.

The first year of the mandated program will be considered a “Pilot Program,” which will run from 07/01/04-06/30/05. At the end of the “Pilot Program” in 06/05, the program will be reviewed and assessed by the Mentor Selection Committee, the BOCES Cabinet and the Cabinet Advisory Council. At this time, additions and/or deletions to the program components will be made with the goal of improving and strengthening the program. An annual report will be made to the BOCES Board of Education.

For the “pilot” year of the Teacher Mentor Program, the compensation for the mentor’s service will be negotiated with the BOCES Faculty Association and reflected in a collective bargaining agreement.

Mentor Selection Committee

Cabinet Members

Clare Garvey – Deputy Superintendent

Linda Heitmann – Executive Director Educational Resources

BFA

Jessica DiBartolo – Special Education Teacher

Susannah Renzi – Special Education Teacher

Cheryl Winstel – CTI Teacher

ASA

John Jeffrey – Coordinator of Alternative Education

Mitchell Shron – Supervisor/Principal Career & Technical Education

Jeff Rouse – Staff Specialist Web Development

Board of Education Policy Committee Members

Mary Falcone, Chair

Edward McCormick

Sam Shufelt

Role of a Mentor

The mentor teacher role is highly valued in BOCES. We recognize that in order for the beginning teacher to grow professionally, sustained and frequent conversations, as well as collegial interaction as provided by the mentor, are integral and critical. Mentor teachers are exemplary classroom teachers who are able to model excellence. A mentor is someone the mentee can call upon for assistance and support to quickly learn the operating procedures of BOCES and its programs.

Mentoring can provide a powerfully positive experience for both the mentee and the mentor. At the heart of a mentoring is a positive relationship between colleagues based on mutual respect. A supportive, encouraging, trusting relationship is essential to the success of this endeavor.

The information obtained by the mentor through interaction with the mentee while engaged in the mentoring activities of the program shall not be used for evaluating or disciplining the mentee; unless withholding such information poses a danger to the life, health, or safety of an individual, including but not limited to students and staff of the school; or unless such information indicates that the mentee has been convicted of a crime, or has committed an act which raises a reasonable question as to the mentee's moral character.

The expectations of the mentor include:

- Dedicate a norm of four hours per month to the mentor/mentee program
- Focus on classroom activities, curriculum, student assessment and grading policy
- Offer and demonstrate an array of instructional techniques
- Suggest and demonstrate a variety of classroom management strategies
- Provide emotional support
- Help mentees become acclimated to the school community
- Provide mentees with proper channels for contractual or policy issues
- Support quality instruction (formative) without being evaluative (summative)
- Provide confidential support
- Educate the mentee about special programs in the BOCES
- Maintain a confidential, candid, and supportive relationship with mentees
- Assist mentees in refining teaching practices, and understanding the learning needs of all students, especially students at risk, those with special needs and those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Assist mentees in enhancing their content expertise and their access to training in their subject matter area
- Assist mentees in applying classroom management and discipline strategies
- Observe and provide timely feedback to mentees
- Facilitate sharing between mentees and mentor teachers
- Provide opportunities for mentees to observe mentor teachers and other exemplary teachers and how their classrooms are structured
- Utilize educational technologies
- Support and facilitate meaningful parent and community involvement in and with the school
- Participate in an ongoing and annual assessment of the mentor teacher program

Qualities of a Good Mentor

Attitude and Character

- Is a role model for other teachers
- Exhibits strong commitment to the teaching profession
- Believes mentoring improves instructional practice
- Advocates on behalf of colleagues
- Receives training to improve mentoring skills
- Demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning
- Is reflective and able to learn from mistakes
- Shares information and ideas with colleagues
- Is resilient, flexible, persistent, and open minded
- Exhibits good humor and resourcefulness
- Enjoys new challenges and solving problems

Interpersonal Skills

- Maintains trusting professional relationships
- Knows how to express care for a mentee's emotional and professional needs
- Is sensitive to political issues
- Works well with individuals from different cultures
- Is approachable; easily establishes rapport with others
- Is patient

Communication Skills

- Is able to articulate effective instructional strategies
- Listens attentively
- Asks questions that prompt reflection and understanding
- Offers critiques in positive and productive ways
- Uses e-mail effectively
- Is efficient with the use of time
- Conveys enthusiasm, passion for teaching
- Is discreet and maintains confidences

Professional Competence and Experience

- Is regarded by colleagues as an outstanding teacher
- Has excellent knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter
- Has confidence in his/her instructional skills
- Feels comfortable being observed by other teachers
- Maintains a network of professional contacts
- Understands the policies and procedures of the school, district, and teachers association
- Is a meticulous observer of classroom practice
- Collaborates well with other teachers and administrators
- Is willing to learn new teaching strategies from the mentee

Mentor Application Process

All mentor candidates must submit a fully completed application and forward it to the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services. Applications will be accepted during the month of April. Each completed application will be reviewed for eligibility. The agency-wide selection committee will meet during the month of May to select a pool of mentor candidates. Interviews will be conducted as necessary. The mentors will be eligible for a two-year period.

The Mentor Selection Committee will consist of a BFA appointed representative from CTI, BETA, and Special Education and three administrators appointed by the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services.

Mentor Qualifications

The Mentor Selection Committee will select potential mentors based on the following criteria:

- Minimum of 5 years experience in their field and qualified under state qualifications
- Demonstration of:
 - Instructional peer leadership
 - High level of competency in teaching and learning
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Strong communication skills
 - Open-mindedness and reflection
 - Good listening skills
 - Enthusiasm and positive attitude
 - Commitment to the excellence in teaching at D.C. BOCES
 - Knowledge of resources and opportunities in D.C. BOCES
 - Knowledge of workplace norms of D.C. BOCES

Mentor Selection

Once a pool of mentors has been selected, the list will be forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services. After a new teacher has been hired, the supervising administrator will select a mentor from the pool of eligible candidates. The supervising administrator will base the selection of a mentor on the following criteria:

- teaching mastery level
- communication skills
- subject area
- grade level
- the needs of the mentee
- seniority of the mentor

The mentor – mentee selection will be made as early as possible, preferably before the school year has begun. This will allow both communication and a level of comfort to be developed between the two parties.

If the mentor pool is not large enough to provide all newly hired staff with mentors, recruitment for additional mentors must be initiated immediately. In the case of insufficient number of mentors, a mentor may have more than one mentee with the approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services.

Mentor Application Form

Name _____ Date _____ Home Phone _____

Home address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Voice Mail / Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Years Total Teaching _____

Subject(s)/ Grade Level(s) _____

Certification Area _____ NYS Certification # _____

Years in BOCES _____ Years in Current Assignment _____

Current Assignment / Location _____

Previous Assignments _____

Previous Teaching Experience _____

Have you ever been selected for the BOCES mentor pool? _____

Have you ever been selected as a mentor in another district? _____

1. Why do you want to be a mentor?

2. What qualities do you possess that will enable you to be a successful mentor?

3. What professional experiences, education or work experience have you had that will help you be a successful mentor?

Mentor/Mentee Timeline & Checklist

August/September
(MENTORS ONLY)

- Mentors to attend training sessions to prepare for mentee:
 - Adult learning characteristics
 - Teacher development
 - Knowledge of beginning teacher needs
 - Conferencing skills
 - Time management methodology
 - Coaching techniques
 - Reflective practice
 - Planning the first year activities
 - Maintaining confidentiality
 - Establishing effective communication with parents
 - Active listening and questioning techniques
- Set up Quarterly Mentor Support group meetings for year

Suggested Monthly Mentor/Mentee Activities

September

- Introducing mentor/mentee pairs
- Developing a timeline of activities utilizing, but not limited to the list below
- Developing curricula and aligning instruction to NYS Standards
- Orienting the mentee to the school culture and its administrative procedures [i.e. paperwork, open house, final exam/standardized test administration, budget preparation, etc.]

October

- Joint lesson planning
- Coaching
- Classroom Management/Discipline

November

- Observing/modeling instruction
- Writing report cards

December

- Completing reflective activities
- Discussing the teacher evaluation process, and the legal rights and responsibilities of a teacher

January

- Sharing growth, recognizing new initiatives and modifying schedule for second half of year
- Career Plan/IEP development, etc.

February

- Sharing problem-solving skills
- Refining classroom and behavior management skills

March

- Assessing students' needs and achievement
- Developing a professional portfolio

April

- Establishing new objectives
- Team Teaching

May

- Maintaining a log of activities conducted, including time involved
- Reviewing process with Administration

June

- Assessing mentor/mentee program

Annual Program Review

The mentor program will be reviewed annually by the Mentor Selection Committee. During the year, discussion between the supervising administrators and mentors, as well as the mentors and mentees, will provide information for assessing and strengthening the mentor program. These discussions will be used in shaping the following year's program.

Activity Log

Instructions: *Both the mentor and mentee should complete and retain a copy of this form monthly during the school year [September through June], even if they do not meet during a particular month.*

Mentor Name:	Mentee Name:
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Month	Date(s) and Duration(s)	Summary of Activities and Discussion

Pursuant to New York State Education Department Regulation 8 NYCRR § 102.2 [dd], "The information obtained and submitted by a mentor through interaction with the new teacher while engaged in the mentoring activities of the program shall not be used for evaluating or disciplining the new teacher; unless withholding such information poses a danger to the life, health, or safety of an individual, including but not limited to students and staff of the school; or unless such information indicates that the new teacher has been convicted of a crime, or has committed an act which raises a reasonable question as to the new teacher's moral character; or unless the school district or BOCES has entered an agreement, negotiated pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law whose terms are in effect, that provides that the information obtained by the mentor through interaction with the new teacher while engaged in the mentoring activities of the program may be used for evaluating or disciplining the new teacher."

