



Introduction

In accordance with the principles of Children First, those closest to students get to make strategic decisions about what happens in their classrooms. New teacher mentoring is one of those strategic decisions that all principals are now empowered to make.

Starting in the 2007-08 school year all Principals will choose the type of mentoring support that is best for their new teachers and staff as we move away from regional-based mentoring to site-based mentoring and decision making. Principals and their schools will decide:

How mentoring will be delivered?
When mentoring will occur?
Who does the mentoring?

To assist schools in building their internal capacity to support their new teachers, a new position Lead Instructional Mentor (LIM) has been added to each School Support Organization network or cohort team. The Lead Instructional Mentor will be a resource available to help each school design an effective site-based mentoring plan and to help each site-based mentor understand and implement mentoring best practices.

As principals assume the responsibility for mentoring their new teachers, the following are suggested elements of an effective school-based mentoring plan:

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Goals of Mentoring

New teachers enter our profession facing many challenges and a steep learning curve. The primary goal of mentoring is to provide supports during the first year so that new teachers can quickly become effective practitioners with the skills and expertise needed to improve student achievement. While this document focuses primarily on mentoring, it is important to note that mentoring is only one component of multiple supports (called new teacher induction) we need to provide for new teachers to help them successfully enter our profession.

Other goals of mentoring (which are also tied to increased student achievement) include **teacher quality, retention, compliance** and **support**. *Teacher quality* is about expediting the growth and development of new teachers' pedagogy, content knowledge, professional skills and expertise. *Teacher quality* is also about helping new teachers become autonomous, reflective practitioners. *Retention* is about retaining promising qualified teachers. It is important to note that retention is not about retaining all teachers; we want to retain those teachers who have the potential and the ability to teach effectively and impact student learning and outcomes. *Compliance* is about New York State regulations. New York State requires that all new teachers with Initial certificates must receive mentoring in their first year of teaching in order to obtain their Professional certificate. Support is about recognizing that no matter how extensive the university and pre-service training, all new teachers face a steep learning curve that can't be simulated in pre-service. *Support* is about easing the transition and supporting the new teacher through the challenges of first year teaching.

Use of Lead Instructional Mentor

The School Support Organization team assigned to work with your school will include a new position called a **Lead Instructional Mentor (LIM)**. The Lead Instructional Mentor is an expert in new teacher growth and development, mentoring best practices, and the *Professional Teaching Standards* and the *Continuum of Teacher Growth and Development*. The Lead Instructional Mentor receives on-going training and support from the Office of New Teacher Induction. The Lead Instructional Mentor will be available to visit your school on a regular basis to support your mentoring program. The LIM will be available to assist schools in

- identifying the teachers who are mandated for mentoring; sharing mentoring best practices;
- designing school-based plans for effective mentoring; implementing the plan;
- training school-based mentors in best mentoring practices;
- guiding, supporting, and coaching school-based mentors as they work with new teachers;
- guiding and supporting school-based mentors' understanding and use of the Professional Teaching Standards; and the Continuum of Teacher Growth and Development; and
- documenting the mentoring experience for the State.



While Lead Instructional Mentors won't provide direct mentoring to new teachers, they can support all other aspects of a school's mentoring program. Principals and schools should consider to what extent they wish to integrate the services of the LIM in their mentoring plans.

Establishing a New Teacher Induction Committee

Contractually each school will form a New Teacher Induction Committee (NTIC) comprised of a principal or designee; chapter leader or designee; teachers; and representatives of constituency groups. A majority of the members of the NTIC shall be teachers. NTIC will be responsible for working with the principal and SSO designee to devise and execute a plan for providing mentoring for new teachers. The plan must include in-classroom support. The principal will make the final decision on the plan provided that the plan must include in-classroom support and comport with required elements specified below. Principals should think about forming those committees now during the spring so that mentoring can start from the first day of school or before.

Who Must Be Mentored

When new teachers apply for the professional certificate, New York State requires documentation that mentoring occurred during the first year of teaching. *Teachers with initial certificates and less than two years of full time prior teaching experience must be mentored.* For most new teachers this simply means that they must be mentored in their first year of teaching. For a few teachers (who can show that they had two years of full time teaching prior to obtaining their initial certificate from New York State), this means that they can apply for a waiver of the mentoring requirement.

Teachers working under *alternative certificates* (transitional A, B, or C) must be mentored. This includes the Teaching Fellows, Teach for America, Peace Corps, and Teaching Opportunity Program participants¹. Teachers working under *internship certificates* start their mentoring requirement when they obtain their initial certificate. There is currently no New York State requirement that *International teachers* be mentored².

¹ Transitional B teachers must also receive daily mentoring for the first 40 days of service

² Note that the Regional Mentoring of the past three years mentored Internationals when mentor caseloads permitted



Approach to Staffing

Careful consideration should be given to the approach to staffing that meets the needs of *your* school:

- Which staff in your building have the pedagogical experience and interpersonal skills to best support your new teachers?
- What would be the impact to their regular programs?
- When will they have the TIME to meet?
- What content areas or grade levels do you need?
- How many new teachers do you project and how many mentors will you need?
- Is the number of new teachers high enough to warrant considering a full time site-based mentor³?
- Is your school arranged in houses or mini-schools?
- Are there staff members who already have mentoring experience and training?
- Do you have already have collaborations with PD vendors or consultants in your building who could also provide mentoring?
- Do you need to look outside of your building for mentoring support?
- Does it make sense to share an experienced expert mentor with several principal colleagues?
- Are there highly qualified F-Status teachers⁴ available?
- What are the costs associated with your staffing selection?

Summary of Possible Staffing Options for School Based Mentoring:

- Internal: **classroom teacher** (by content, grade level, house/team/cluster, teaching expertise, prior mentoring experience) or **site-based staff developer** (coach, staff developer, lead teacher, etc.) or **full time site-based mentor** (position would be funded by school budget)
- External: **shared mentor** (several schools share and fund the cost of a full time mentor expert) or **F-Status teacher** (see footnote 4 below)
- Any combination of the above

³ Memorandum of Agreement with the UFT: If the plan includes a full time mentor position, the ratio of mentor to new teachers may not exceed 1:15

⁴ Memorandum of Agreement with the UFT states that "F" status teachers may only be used in instances where the school cannot provide appropriate internal mentor matches.



Mentoring Matches

Mentors should be selected based on mastery of pedagogical skills, content knowledge, teaching experience, interpersonal skills and a willingness to serve as a mentor. Additional factors for consideration include leadership qualities, organizational skills, experience with mentoring, and positive attitude toward professional growth. Skills or attitudes such as enthusiasm for teaching and the ability to see many different ways to accomplish a purpose or goal are also desirable in mentor candidates. Mentors should be matched by license or content area expertise and level when possible. Note: Every “master” teacher of students doesn’t necessarily correlate with being an ideal mentor for adults and colleagues.

If your school plan calls for the use of classroom teachers who will require **release time** from their teaching program or the use of **per session** for a portion of the mentoring, a school-based posting and interviews by the New Teacher Induction Committee are necessary.⁵ The committee establishes a pool of eligible mentor teachers. The committee then makes recommendations for matches. Mentors should be matched by license or content area expertise and level when possible. The principal has the final say and should ensure that the committee has a clear understanding of all of the factors that go into making effective mentor selections⁶ and matches.

Role of Mentor:

Role:

The mentor’s overall role is to promote the growth and development of the beginning teacher to improve student learning. Specifically the mentor

- Helps accelerate the pedagogical skill and content knowledge development of the beginning teacher,
- uses reflective conversations to help the beginning teacher become an autonomous independent practitioner,
- provides both collegial and emotional support to beginning teachers as they face the challenges of the first year of teaching, and
- maintains logs of the mentored experience on behalf of the new teacher’s professional certification requirements.

⁵ The Memorandum of Agreement with the UFT states: “If the plan encompasses a model that includes release time for classroom teachers to mentor or per session for mentors, the NTIC (New Teacher Induction Committee) will work with the principal to design a school-based posting. The NTIC will interview applicants and recommend mentors. Once a roster of mentors is chosen, the committee will match mentors and new teachers. The final decision will be made by the principal.

⁶ The Memorandum of Agreement with the UFT states: “The minimum requirements for qualifying mentors are: *5 years of teaching in NYC public school preferred *demonstrated mastery of pedagogical and subject matter skills *evidence of interpersonal skills *commitment to participate in professional development



Relationship:

One of the mentor's initial roles is to establish a trusting relationship with the new teacher. Research indicates that mentoring is most effective when the beginning teacher trusts the mentor. The mentor builds this trust by creating a risk-free learning environment for the beginning teacher by providing support that is non-judgmental and confidential. While confidentiality means that the mentor does not share any evaluative information about the beginning teacher with anyone (including administration and the principal), it does not mean that there is no communication between the mentor and administration. The mentor is encouraged to share topics & content discussed and strategies used.

Types of Interactions:

The mentor meets with the beginning teacher for regularly scheduled structured meetings for the equivalent of 2 or more periods per week. Meetings must include both in-classroom support and should include one-on-one conferences. When the mentor views the beginning teacher's practice, there is a mutually agreed upon purpose and the mentor shares objective non-judgmental classroom practice data. When the mentor meets one-on-one with the beginning teacher, it's for the purpose of holding reflective conferences to build the teacher's capacity to make effective decisions. The mentor guides the beginning teacher to use classroom data and student data to come up with strategies, solutions, and next steps.

Strategies:

A wide range of strategies are available to the mentor in working with the beginning teacher. A list of some strategies is included below:

- introduce and orientate the new teacher to the school
- assist the new teacher to identify and access school and community resources
- assist new teacher to develop classroom rules and routines
- assist new teacher with classroom management
- assist new teacher to set up classroom
- assist new teacher with lesson planning
- assist new teacher with formal and informal assessment strategies
- assist new teacher with analysis of student work and differentiation of instruction
- assist new teacher to understand and use the curriculum and student standards
- use the *Professional Teaching Standards* and *Continuum of Teacher Development* to guide the new teacher's growth and development
- use structured tools (such as the Formative Assessment System) to guide interactions and keep the conversation focused
- view new teacher's classroom to provide objective non-judgmental data



- arrange reciprocal classroom visits
- model and conduct demonstration lessons
- co-teach with the new teacher
- assist the teacher to develop short and long term goals
- help prepare the new teacher for supervisors' observations
- assist the new teacher to effectively communicate with parents
- help prepare the new teacher for parent-teacher conferences
- assist the new teacher to understand and comply with clerical responsibilities

Mentor Growth & Development:

The mentor understands that supporting a beginning teacher requires a different set of skills and competencies than those used in supporting students. The mentor is committed to participating in professional development to learn, enhance, and deepen his/her mentoring skills. One valuable resource for this professional development is the **Lead Instructional Mentor** who is part of the School Support Organization network or cohort team. The Lead Instructional Mentor will be available to provide a variety of supports including: mentoring tools, mentor language & stems, mentor protocols & strategies, use of the *Professional Teaching Standards & Continuum of Teacher Development* to guide mentoring, one-on-one coaching on mentoring, objective feedback, maintaining logs, small group workshops, etc.

Role of the New Teacher

Beginning teachers also have a role to play in making mentoring successful. New York State mandates that beginning teachers with Initial certification must be mentored in their first year of teaching in order to qualify for Professional certification. Beginning teachers maximize the benefits of this mandate, however, when they take an **active** role in the process with the mentor.

Beginning teachers can take an active role by

- being available to meet regularly with their mentor
- understanding that the mentor's support is intended to be non judgmental and confidential⁷
- inviting the mentor to view their classroom
- participating in reciprocal visits to the mentor's classroom
- continually reflecting on their classroom practice

⁷ While confidentiality means that the mentor does not share any evaluative information about the beginning teacher with anyone (including administration and the principal), it does not mean that there is no communication between the mentor and administration. The mentor is encouraged to share topics & content discussed and strategies used.



- identifying areas in which assistance is needed
- being open to suggestions developed in collaboration with the mentor.

Allocating Time for Mentoring

The expected mentor/ new teacher contact time during the school day will be equivalent to two (2) periods per week or more. While mentors and beginning teachers' work together can be structured and accomplished in a variety of ways, a portion of the regularly scheduled contact time must include in-classroom support. If the plan includes mentoring to be performed by classroom teachers, it may require that mentoring activities be conducted during the mentor's professional period (but it may not require the classroom teacher to perform mentoring activities during lunch or preparation periods). The plan may also include, without an SBO, release time for classroom teachers⁸. Mentors and new teachers may also meet before and or after school⁹ for conferencing and planning activities. Two of the weekly professional periods for new teachers may be designated by the principal for mentoring¹⁰. Principals can facilitate time for mentoring by aligning preparation periods of new teachers and professional periods of mentors.

Role of the Principal

There are many strategies that principals can use to promote successful mentoring experiences for their new teachers. If possible, mentoring matches should be made before the start of the school year; the first days of school are critical for a new teacher's success. If possible, schools should avoid assigning new teachers to the most difficult students and schedules. The work of the mentor should be coordinated with other staff who may be working with the beginning teacher. While principals should avoid asking the mentor for evaluative feedback about the new teacher; principals should know the topics and strategies that mentors and new teachers are using as they work together. Principals should confirm that the mentor/ new teacher relationship is working. Principals should consider scheduling on-going new teacher group meetings with the principal for support beyond mentoring. Principals should ensure that mentors receive professional development on how to be effective mentors.

⁸ School based posting required if classroom teachers are to be given release time

⁹ Both mentors and new teachers will be paid per session

¹⁰ UFT Contract