

Grand Island Public Schools

Mentor Teacher Program

Mentoring is a process by which a trusted and experienced person takes a direct professional and personal responsibility for facilitating the growth and development of a less experienced individual.

Program Description and Purpose

The district's mentor teacher program is a two-year program designed to provide novice teachers with professional and personal support through a structured, yet flexible, process and set of activities that results in high performing, reflective practitioners. District administrators, in conjunction with school principals, have responsibility for assigning a mentor for each teacher new to the Grand Island Public Schools with two or less years of prior teaching experience.

Mentor program activities will address the district's four domains of teaching (planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities). Professional development will focus on helping new teachers use research-based strategies. Specific topics addressed will include student and classroom management, communication with students and parents, instructional planning, student assessment, and various other districtwide and school improvement efforts.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Participate in orientation and ongoing training sessions designed specifically to expand understandings and proficiencies relevant to mentoring new teachers.
- Participate in sessions, with and without assigned mentees, designed specifically to expand understandings and proficiencies of research-based or "best" teaching and learning practices.
- Maintain weekly contact (approximately an hour a week) with assigned mentee in order to provide various forms of professional and personal support.
- Provide various forms of professional (technical) assistance including opportunities to share expertise, ask questions, dialogue about effective strategies and practices, mutually analyze and solve various educational and management issues, and reflect on performance.
- Provide various forms of personal (social and emotional) support including opportunities to show personal interest, provide encouragement to persist during difficult situations, maintain and increase the level of confidence and enthusiasm challenge the mentee to think and solve problems, and promote responsible risk-taking which will lead to growth and improvement.
- Model effective instruction, observe the mentee's instruction, help develop effective self-evaluation and reflection skills.
- Observe the mentee's instruction for the purpose of providing helpful feedback and improving performance.
- Help the mentee develop strong self-evaluation and reflection skills.
- Provide the mentee with a variety of helpful educational resources, strategies, and experiences.
- Support districtwide and school improvement efforts, including the priorities of our mentor teacher program.
- Assist the principal in designing and implementing appropriate professional development plans for the mentee.

Qualifications

- Completed a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience. When applicable, has successfully completed the district's two-year mentor program (a teacher cannot serve simultaneously as a mentee and mentor).
- Displays lifelong learning abilities and participates in ongoing professional development in order to improve teaching effectiveness.
- Demonstrates effective coaching, communication, and collaborative skills, including giving and receiving constructive feedback, being responsive to the ideas of others, and maintaining confidential relationships.
- Shows a willingness to actively mentor a new teacher through their novice years, assuming a shared responsibility for coaching and supervision the mentee's growth and improvement. This generally includes prioritizing designated mentor meetings over other district activities.

Selection Process

School principals are responsible for recruiting mentors for their school's novice teachers in a timely manner and for making recommendations to district administrators (Secondary and Elementary T&L Directors), who will make final assignments. Principals are expected to personally explain the purposes and expected roles and responsibilities to potential mentors, and also provide these persons with this job description. Mentoring is a choice and should be presented as a wonderful growth opportunity and chance to give back to the profession.

It is generally recommended that mentors not supervise a student teacher during Year One (Year Two is fine). Based on the need for strong mentors, consideration will be given to allowing a qualified teacher to mentor more than one mentee within a school year (e.g., two mentors assigned in Year One or assigning a Year One mentee and a Year Two mentee to one mentor).

Resources and Support

Mentor teachers will be provided with administrative support from principals and the T&L administrators, professional development, and other resources and forms of structural support (e.g., common instructional planning periods) that are needed to facilitate a successful mentoring experience.

Compensation

Mentors may earn a maximum of \$1,000 annually, for each of their two years of mentoring, when approved mentoring tasks are successfully accomplished and support documentation is completed by the established deadlines (increments of \$250 with the September, December, March, and June paychecks). Approved mentoring activities will be compensated at the district's C&A rate (\$21 hourly in 2007-08). This equates to fifty hours of mentoring, which is based approximately on two days of initial training and collaboration (14 hours) with one hour weekly throughout the school year (36 hours). Second-year mentees will also be compensated for some, but not all, of their activities at the same rate of \$21 hourly.

The First Mentorship

When Odysseus was preparing to set out for a long journey, he worried about the many responsibilities he had. He worried about his wife and particularly about his son, Telemachus. As a devoted father and guardian, he wanted his son to have a strong influence. As was the custom in ancient Greece, this meant a strong role model.

Just before Odysseus set out, he asked his dearest friend, Mentor, to provide guidance for his son. He asked his friend to teach Telemachus "to be wise beyond the world, to know the secrets of the heart and soul, to lead with courage and kindness, to develop physical strength and compassion, and to be loved and respected by his associates." With these words, the first mentorship began.

You are continuing the legacy that began several thousand years ago.