

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Mentors can make a huge difference.

According to a 2015 federal study, **92%** of first-year teachers who were assigned a mentor returned to their classroom.



It is important to pair early-career teachers with mentors who are effective, engaged, and collaborative. Once you've matched up teachers with their mentors, be sure to provide ongoing support for these relationships. Set clear expectations for mentors and mentees and block out time during regular work hours for them to meet.

The monthly hour sessions are organized around the following components:

Dine and Unwind (25 min)

The administration identifies mentorship funds to provide dinner for participants. We informally reconnect over the meal.



Additionally, the administrator could find a substitute teacher or personally cover one of their classes/lunch so that the new teacher and mentor can meet or be in each other's classrooms. If the correct mentor is chosen, the principal should want the new teacher to learn and borrow ideas and practices from their assigned colleague. Again, such observations must begin early in the year and continue as needed.

Diggin' In (30 min)

The bulk of the hour is devoted to Digging In where we engage in reflective practices. These vary on whatever the topic admin thinks would be best to discuss. This helps mentors and mentees work through dilemmas of practice to engaging in specific aspects of strategies.



The administrator can provide prompts, resources, and discussion questions for the mentor and mentee during this time. Please refer to my MONTHLY SUGGESTIONS FOR SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS.

Feedback (5 min)



Written feedback is gathered at the end of each session. Each participant is asked to write a short reflection on their thoughts about the evening meeting. These reflections are usually a sentence to a paragraph in length.

We collect their written reflections for several reasons:

1. Leaving the last five minutes for reflection helps them clarify their "takeaways."
2. Gathering participants' feedback helps the mentor better understand how they made sense of a session, what they valued, and any concerns they experienced to plan for the next month's session.
3. Because a full month typically passes before the group reconvenes, anonymous excerpts of the written feedback can be shared in the next session to remind participants what we thought and felt due to the previous month's work together.

Sharing these excerpts serves to close the feedback loop.

NEW TEACHER

COMMUNITY

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According to a 2015 federal study, **92%** of first-year teachers who were assigned a mentor returned to their classroom.



New teachers can be hesitant to share their thinking publicly - during staff meetings or conversations with principals. Building a community of peers (within the school or across different schools) where every person is in similar situations and have a voice can be incredibly uplifting. Once the community is established, the administration must support these relationships by ensuring the pair has a regularly scheduled time to meet and interact and has at least one mentor assigned to the group. Set clear expectations for mentors and mentees and block out time during regular work hours for them to meet.

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Dine and Unwind (25 min)

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Additionally, the administrator could find a substitute teacher or personally cover one of their classes or lunch so the teachers can meet. Teachers can feel comfortable learning and borrowing ideas and practices from their assigned colleagues if given this time and space.

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