

Tantasqua Regional School District and Union 61

Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program

Overview

The Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program is an asset to the Tantasqua and Union 61 School districts. This action plan identifies the following: the vision, purpose and goals of the program, program expectations for all participants including mentors, mentees, program coordinators and school administrators, the structure and benefits of the program and ways that community members can support the program.

Communication Plan

In addition to this action plan, information about the New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program may be shared through the Tantasqua Union 61 websites, the Around the Region district newsletter, school based open houses, press releases in local newspapers, school committee meetings, and presentations at faculty meetings.

Vision and Goals

- ◇ The district will facilitate an induction program that meets the needs of all newly hired educators and first-year teachers. Mentors are trained in a three-year cycle in order to maintain consistency of support and align all required activities, schedules and program specific events.
- ◇ The district will hold a formal orientation for new teachers prior to the start of the school year. The orientation will include an overview of the district's schools and key personnel and highlights of the Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program including expectations of mentors and mentees and schedule of activities.
- ◇ Throughout the school year, new teachers are required to attend approximately eight after school sessions which focus on the four Standards of Educator Practice as outlined by the DESE.
 - I: Curriculum and, Planning & Assessment
 - II: Teaching All Students
 - III: Family & Community Engagement
 - IV: Professional Culture

These sessions may be held in different schools throughout the district, as appropriate.

- ◇ The program goals focus on:
 - Providing support and resources.
 - Improving instruction and student learning.
 - Providing a format for consistent professional conversation between the mentor and mentee which will inspire reflection on teaching practices and provide steps and resources for identified areas of professional growth.

- Providing a strong structure of support to assist the new teacher with integrating into the climate and culture of the school and becoming an active and contributing member of the professional community.

Needs of new and Beginning Teachers

Tantasqua and Union 61 School Districts acknowledge that new and beginning teachers need additional support and professional development opportunities. These may include the need to:

- ◇ Gain an understanding of the school and district goals, learning expectations, culture and values.
- ◇ Feel welcomed and celebrated by the learning community.
- ◇ Gain a full understanding of the demographics and culture of the town/s they serve.
- ◇ Expand their knowledge of instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, lesson plan creation, design and analysis and curricular pacing and mapping.
- ◇ Identify and implement strategies for parent and community involvement.
- ◇ Learn school protocols for emergencies, school crisis plan.
- ◇ Locate educational materials, resources and equipment at their school.
- ◇ Understand the methods of assessing and reporting student progress at their schools.
- ◇ Learn about the educator evaluation process.

Roles and Responsibilities of Principals

Tantasqua and Union 61 School Districts understand that principals play a crucial role in supporting new and beginning teachers. Principals are responsible for:

- ◇ Being aware of the components of the mentoring and induction program.
- ◇ Encouraging new teachers to observe veteran teachers and providing mentees with “coverage” so that they are able to observe colleagues.
- ◇ Identifying and recruiting qualified mentors.
- ◇ Assigning mentor/mentee pairs.
- ◇ Attending the Celebration of Learning at the culmination of the mentor and induction program.

Roles and Responsibilities of Other School Building Staff

Faculty and staff in the Tantasqua and Union 61 schools are at the heart of the learning community. In order to continue to foster supportive and successful schools, veteran faculty and staff are responsible for:

- ◇ Welcoming new members of the faculty and staff.
- ◇ Introducing themselves to new educators.
- ◇ Providing information about school policies, procedures and resources.
- ◇ Supporting new teachers by sharing supplies, resources and/or instructional ideas when appropriate.
- ◇ Fostering a positive work environment.
- ◇ Modeling professionalism.

Roles and Responsibilities of Program Coordinators

The mentor and induction program coordinators serve a central role in planning, facilitating, reflecting, modeling and revising the content and format of the program. Their responsibilities include:

- ◇ Scheduling and attending mentor training.
- ◇ Planning and facilitating new and beginning teacher orientation.
- ◇ Welcoming new teachers and mentors.
- ◇ Creating a positive and nurturing climate for all members of the induction program.
- ◇ Helping new teachers to network within the Tantasqua and Union 61 communities.
- ◇ Communicating the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees.
- ◇ Planning and facilitating after school sessions designed to meet the professional needs of new teachers, approximately eight meetings held through the school year.
- ◇ Developing and utilizing an induction program website.
- ◇ Using educational technology such as Twitter, Remind101, and/or GroupMe to provide “real-time” communication throughout the academic year.
- ◇ Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the program, through surveys and other forms of collecting data, in order to continue to make improvements to the program.

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

Tantasqua and Union 61 School Districts understand that mentors play a crucial role in supporting new and beginning teachers. The following is a comprehensive detailing of the roles and responsibilities of mentors in our district.

- ◇ Confidentiality: Maintain confidentiality unless the well-being of the mentee or his/her students is in question, or a mentee has given explicit permission to share any conversations with anyone outside the mentoring relationship.
- ◇ Mentors will be required to attend the Orientation for lunch and a short meeting afterward. In addition, mentors will also be required to attend 2-3 meetings after school with the program coordinators.
- ◇ Mentor/mentee meetings are required twice per month, at a minimum, and should be recorded in the log sheet along with topic/s discussed, plan for future actions and initialed by the mentee.
- ◇ During your initial meetings, remember to address questions about building procedures, school policies, practices and resources.
- ◇ Make time for informal contact with mentees to provide encouragement and answer questions as needed.
- ◇ Assist the mentee with collegial relationships and encourage him/her to become a contributing member of grade level teams and the school community as a whole.
- ◇ Make time to invite the mentee to observe aspect/s of your practice. Schedule several classroom visits for you to see your mentee with students. Provide data and other suggestions for growth and guidance. Record these observation times and dates on your log. Seek assistance from your building principal to provide any substitute coverage as needed.
- ◇ Encourage your mentee to identify areas professional growth through reflection and focused dialogue.

- ◇ Toward the end of the school year your mentee will be planning a short student-centered presentation for the Celebration of Teaching. Assist with this process and planning, as needed.
- ◇ At the conclusion of the formal mentoring year, you will be required to attend the Celebration of Teaching with your mentee. This event is typically scheduled at the beginning of June and takes place between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Roles and Responsibilities of New Teachers/Mentees

Tantasqua and Union 61 School Districts understand that new teachers/mentees also play a crucial role in achieving a successful and productive relationship with their mentors. The following is a comprehensive detailing of the roles and responsibilities of mentees in our district.

- ◇ Meet on a regular basis with his/her mentor. Meeting topics can be predetermined by the mentee to meet his/her current needs. Formal meetings are required twice per month. Informal meetings are encouraged and should be frequent.
- ◇ If after several meetings, you find that the mentor assignment is not conducive to a productive relationship, communicate this to any program coordinator for assistance.
- ◇ Confidentiality should be maintained unless the mentor has given explicit permission to share information with someone outside the mentoring relationship.
- ◇ Attendance and participation is required at all after school sessions. Independent work may also be assigned. Topics will focus on the four educator standards as outlined by the DESE.
- ◇ Make plans to visit your mentor in his/her classroom with students and schedule any peer observations, classroom visits, that you may need to assist you with improving any area/s of your practice.
- ◇ Reflect on your practice throughout the year and share your thoughts during meetings with your mentor. Work with him/her to effectively use mentor observations and feedback, conversations with colleagues, classroom visits and professional resources to enhance components of your practice.
- ◇ Attend and make at a brief student-centered presentation at the Celebration of Teaching at the end of the school year.